

To Miss Halliday  
from the Am  
In memory of the long friend  
between Glenthorne &  
Ashley Com

Nov. 1928

RALPH EARL OF LOVELACE



RALPH MILBANKE, LORD WENTWORTH  
ÆTAT. 25—30.

RALPH EARL OF  
LOVELACE  
A MEMOIR

BY

MARY COUNTESS OF LOVELACE



LONDON  
CHRISTOPHERS

22 BERNERS STREET, W.1

*First published in 1920.*

## PREFACE

MANY years ago a small company of children were wont to gather in an old house near London, where the famous Jenny Lind, then a friendly neighbour, would come and sing to them. She chose for them old ballads and folk songs, often those of our own northern border-country, and, great artist that she was, she subdued her glorious voice and made it her only care that no word of the stories that she had to tell should be lost upon her little hearers. So, then, for ever after their minds were stored with dim pictures of peasant lives in far-off lands and ancient legends of war and love and death. I was one of those children, and one of those songs has often come back of late years to my mind. If I shut my eyes I seem still, after a whole life-time, to hear the low tender notes, charged with all the sorrow of the world, and the syllables of the wild refrain falling slowly one by one in the hushed room :—

There were three ravens sat on a tree,  
Down a down, hey down, hey down ;  
They were as black as they might be ;

## PREFACE

And one of them said to his mate,  
“ Where shall we our breakfast take ? ”  
With a down, derry derry, derry down down.

Ah, well-a-day ; in yonder field.  
Down a down, hey down, hey down :  
A knight lies slain beneath his shield ;  
With a down . . .  
Against his feet his hounds you see,  
They guard their lord right faithfully.  
With a down, derry derry, derry down down.

His hawks about him ever fly,  
Down a down, hey down, hey down ;  
There's not a bird that ventures nigh !  
With a down . . .

Not many of us, happily, see the ravens of calumny hovering over our beloved dead, but who so callous as to deny the duty of driving them away ? On him, of whom this is the memoir, this duty fell with a crushing weight, insomuch as he could not do justice to her who had been to him, as he said, “ father and mother in one ”—without acknowledging the guilt of another equally near in blood, though not in love and gratitude. When he had carried out this duty by writing his book “ Astarte ” —a labour of love in some ways, but in others an intensely distasteful task—blame and misrepresentation fell on him in his turn. It was after his death that the abuse reached its climax ; and though it was of course far less in amount and in bitterness than that which had been poured out upon Lord B.

it was felt to be very odious by his family and friends.

There was also a curious want of general comprehension of his position. Few seemed to remember that certain facts regarding Byron had been once for all disclosed to the world by a stranger ; and that in the inevitable discussions of the story, which never really ceased, he, as the living representative of the actors in it, had to choose between countenancing a system of constant lying, and an acknowledgment, once for all, of the truth. The fact that his book was published in a very restricted way, and was therefore accessible to few readers, while it was widely known by hearsay, no doubt led to this want of comprehension.

But the few persons who really understood the matter, especially those who had loved and appreciated Lovelace himself, have always urged upon me the duty of bringing out some clear explanation of his motives and of the obstacles and uncertainties with which he had to contend. The story covered many years, and no one knew it accurately except myself. I had, therefore, all unpractised in writing as I am, to undertake the task. And as the tale unfolded itself, how could I help trying to depict the man himself, and the true bent of his mind, apart from the constant necessity for occupying himself with that miserable old story of other people's sins, — which was the burden of his life ? With all my heart

## PREFACE

I wish that I had known better how to carry out my task, but at least I can plead that I have striven to do it "right faithfully."

1920.

M. C. L.

*PUBLISHERS' NOTE.*

*A new edition of "Astarte" including many hitherto unpublished letters from Lord and Lady Byron, Mrs. Leigh, and Mrs. Villiers, is in preparation at the time of going to press.*

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# RALPH EARL OF LOVELACE

## CHAPTER I

### EARLY DAYS

IN the late sixties of the last century there appeared in London society a slender, dark-eyed youth, whose name—Lord Wentworth—at once arrested the interest of the older generation. Diffident and awkward in manner, with gentle voice and formal, hesitating speech, he formed a singular contrast with other young men of his age and class. The mark of the home-bred boy was on him. He had no school friendships, and he could not talk slang. To those who took pains to draw him out it was plain that he lived in the world of books rather than of men. His mind was feeling about bewildered among the commonplace realities of life, but originality and independence of thought were already manifest in him. It was not, however, among those of his own age that he found the sympathy which understands. There are no judgments so harsh and so narrow as those of a community of young people all imbued with the same traditions and habits, physical and mental. To the young men stamped with the hallmark of Eton and Oxford or of some fashionable

regiment, and to the young women for whom these were the ideal of manhood, he seemed like a being from another planet. He knew nothing of sport nor games, he could not dance nor even dress in the one and only acceptable way, and if the question of admitting him to the comradeship of their joyous band had ever been seriously considered by them (which it was not), he would have been suspect because he had no single early intimacy of his own age to boast of.

Many legends were current about him. His mother—that Ada Byron who never knew her illustrious father—was dead, and his father, William King, first Earl of Lovelace, had married again. It was known that he had been entirely brought up by his grandmother, Lady Byron, widow of the poet, and that a quarrel between her and Lord Lovelace had made the boy a stranger in his father's house. That father, if he was more feared than loved by family and friends, was at least widely known and respected as a man of great intellectual gifts and vigour of character, and the fact that his son had been deprived of his care was generally regarded as a great misfortune to him. Lady Byron, on the other hand, though not long dead, was but a shadowy figure even to her surviving contemporaries. Prejudice, vague but noxious, still lingered against her as the supposedly unappreciative wife of a man of genius. As an older woman, she had been almost unknown except in connection with

various educational and philanthropic schemes, some of which were thought eccentric and unpractical. It was reputed that her grandson was her principal educational experiment, which was true. But it was not true that she had sent him to a peasant school in Switzerland, there to be educated among the roughest class in the roughest possible manner. The foundation of this absurd story was apparently Lady Byron's friendship with the family of the well-known Swiss educationalist, Emmanuel de Fellenberg, and the fact that little Ralph King (as he then was) once spent a month at Hofwyl, not in the famous school itself, but as a visitor in the house of the founder's son and successor. His upbringing had been in fact the very reverse of de Fellenberg's wholesome and manly system, which, as is well known, was by no means intended or established only for peasants.<sup>1</sup>

Ralph's education was almost entirely bookish, sedentary, solitary. He was isolated from boys and girls of his own age, and his only contact with the

<sup>1</sup> Emmanuel de Fellenberg, patrician of Berne, had converted his family estate at Hofwyl into a vast educational institution, his leading idea being to combine the best possible literary teaching with an outdoor life and training in all that pertains to agriculture. This institution comprised : (1) a farm-school for working boys ; (2) an "academy for the sons of wealthier persons" ; (3) an agricultural institute connected with a small experimental farm ; (4) a manufactory of farming machinery and implements. A full account of this celebrated school, the founder of which was a pioneer in some of the best modern educational ideas, may be found in the *Edinburgh Review* for December, 1818, and October, 1819. The articles are said to be by Lord Brougham.

male sex was in the persons of a dreary succession of tutors, only one or two of whom seem to have been at all fitted for their office. If Lady Byron showed but little judgment in the choice of these unlucky gentlemen, she could at least be very firm with them when they had proved their incapacity, and the result was continual change and the lack of any continuity and discipline, which their pupil greatly regretted in after life. Lady Byron, herself an only child and mother of an only daughter, must have been gaining some knowledge of "the human boy" for the first time in her life. She wrote (1850—52) :—"Master Ralph is making some experiments on Tutors' nature. I could prevent them, but I do not wish to mix an element which would falsify the result." This was sensible, and there is abundant evidence that, as time went on, a very deep affection and an amount of mutual comprehension unusual in such a relationship subsisted between the old woman and the growing lad. Nevertheless, in spite of some contumacious actions and letters on his part, she probably never realised his increasing restiveness under the shackles that she imposed upon him. She seems to have had unbounded belief in the power to mould character by education, and her fixed idea was to shield her grandson from the kind of influences that she thought had corrupted Byron as a boy. Many years later, when he had begun to analyse his family history, and especially Lady Byron's character and

conduct after her separation, he thus wrote to his sister :—

. . . I have lost I think by the “education” she substituted for a public school. I should not have lamented any loss if I could have been entirely formed and instructed by her—but, alas ! I was frequently with people of a very low order (such as Kensett) and sent to visit people of much too great an age for a boy, as : Lady Caroline Bathurst, Dr. King—and for the sake of not losing time from studies (from which I derived no benefit) I was prevented from taking advantage of some of the few opportunities of making really good acquaintances, *i.e.*, with other boys and girls. Either I had no similarity to B—— (Byron) or a mistake was made as to what had been most injurious in his education. The strength of certain tendencies of my character (which it was determined to repress) was underrated—consequently they did not develop in a beneficial way, while it was not (as expected) possible to destroy them. It may have been partly my fault from the want of power to communicate what was innermost in my heart. . . . I was supposed to possess such a vigorous genius as to need a very serious, solitary and depressing education. I had not, as it turned out, sufficient mental and moral vitality to thrive under such restrictions.

Alas ! for the “want of power to communicate what was innermost in my heart,” which is the secret of many an unhappy childhood !

When the time came for Ralph to go to Oxford he was not allowed to live as an ordinary undergraduate.

boarder in the family of Professor Donkin ; and he was sent to University College, apparently because it was unfashionable and the chance of his meeting there with any young men of his own kindred, or bound by ties of friendship with his family, was extremely slender. Lady Byron no doubt intended, when the right time should come, herself to superintend the entry of her grandson into some sort of social life, but it was not to be. His course at Oxford was only half run when, in May, 1860, after a few weeks' illness, she died at the age of sixty-seven, and Ralph found himself homeless and very desolate. His father's house might have been open to him, but in the freshness of his grief for his grandmother he could not turn to her antagonist,<sup>1</sup> and his sister lived with her father. He requested the authorities of his College to allow him to occupy rooms there during the Long Vacation, and, when they refused, there was no one to hinder him from taking the bit between his teeth and cutting short his Oxford career altogether. Lady Byron had always hitherto restrained his passion for solitary travel, but now he was free, and, accordingly, for the next two years, except for short intervals, he was absent from England. It was on his return from a year's sojourn in Iceland that he found his elder brother dying of consumption as a result of hardships endured at sea.

<sup>1</sup> Lady Byron and Lord Lovelace had not spoken to each other

The identity of this elder brother, Byron Noel King, Viscount Ockham, has been often confused with that of his junior, who has accordingly been credited with some eccentricities that were not his. Young Ockham seems to have been a dreamy, silent child, capable of considerable contumacy at times. He went early into the Navy, and when, after his first voyage, he begged and prayed to be released from it, his father—always a stern disciplinarian—insisted upon sending him to sea again. The result of this harshness was that he deserted his ship, found his way on to a small trading vessel, and worked his way home from the Black Sea before the mast. The voyage lasted many months, during which he was completely lost sight of by his family. Finally he landed at Hull, very ill and in rags. Fortunately he was able to make himself known to some Yorkshire friends of Lady Byron's, who took him in and sheltered him, until relatives intervened and insisted upon some provision being made for him by his father, who never forgave him.

I could not if I would relate all the vicissitudes of this sad young life. The best-known episode is that for some time he worked in a shipbuilder's yard as an ordinary mechanic under the name of John Okey. He had early developed socialistic and revolutionary ideas, and desired to repudiate his rank and all the advantages of his inherited place in the world. I have some childish letters in which he holds up the

leaders of the French Revolution to the admiration of his small brother, aged eleven. Such ideas were unspeakably distasteful to his autocratic father. To others they seemed to be a not unnatural reaction from the tyrannical discipline of his home, and from that father's obvious pride of caste. Lord Lovelace was a man of great ability and learning, who owed the high place that he held among his contemporaries far more to his character and actions than to any advantages of position. He was a self-taught architect and engineer, and many are the buildings and other constructions which remain as mementoes of his talent, especially the beautiful home which he carved out of the hillside at Ashley Combe, in Somerset. His various public activities as Lord-Lieutenant of Surrey I have no space to describe here.

It is sad to have to record that the effect of his tyranny, and of his total lack of comprehension and sympathy for ideas other than his own, upon the three children of his first marriage, was to make them all their lives unable to appreciate the better aspects of his character.

By his brother's death in September, 1862, Ralph became his father's heir. He had only a year before, according to direction in Lady Byron's will, assumed her name of Milbanke.<sup>1</sup> He now had to undergo another change, and he decided not to bear the same

<sup>1</sup> He figures as "Ralph Milbanke" in the "Dictionary of National Biography." See also *ibid.*, 1912.

courtesy title as his brother, but to claim the old barony, the right to which he had inherited from Lady Byron. Accordingly, in May, 1864, after establishing his claim before the Committee of Privileges in the House of Lords, he took his seat there as Lord Wentworth, thirteenth of the name ; and for thirty years was in the somewhat unusual position of sitting in that assembly contemporaneously with his own father.

The result was a transformation of the recluse which was startling to his friends, and old Miss Montgomery<sup>1</sup> wrote to her nephew at Oxford :—

. . . What do you think of Ralph's entry into the gay world after coating, hatting and gloving himself like other people ? He accepts all manner of invitations showered down on the "*neu gebacken*" lord, and has even *danced* at Lady Palmerston's ball. Besides these frivolities, he attends the House of Lords daily to learn his business there, sitting on the cross-benches until he shall have determined on the side to be taken.

When Wentworth (as we must now call him), after Lady Byron's death, mused over the prepossessions which had caused the peculiarities and disadvantages of his own education, it was natural that he should also study and speculate upon the words and acts of his famous grandfather, especially as having been the

<sup>1</sup> Mary Millicent Montgomery, of the family now represented by Hugh de Fellenberg Montgomery, of Blessingbourne, co. Tyrone, Lady Byron's lifelong and most intimate friend.

cause of these prepossessions. He was twenty-three years old when he first guessed at the dark story which grew in time to be so heavy an oppression on his own life. Forty years later he wrote<sup>1</sup> :—

The truth bursts from Byron's lines on first reading them. It was from them that it flashed as an entire surprise upon two generations of his descendants with no previous knowledge of family secrets or hints from anyone. First his daughter, and twenty or thirty years later the present writer, some two years after Lady Byron's death, were startled by Lord Byron's own revelations, which were long afterwards confirmed by acquaintance with private letters.

He had at this time no means of verifying his intuitions. Three trustees had been appointed to the care of Lady Byron's papers under her will : Miss Mary Carpenter, well known as a philanthropist,<sup>2</sup> Miss Frances Carr, sister-in-law of Dr. Lushington, and Mr. Henry Allen Bathurst, of Doctors' Commons. Of these the two women were the elders and the stronger personalities, both having been intimate friends and almost contemporaries of Lady Byron herself. One of them, Miss Carr, was much

<sup>1</sup> "Astarte," p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> Mary Carpenter (1807—1877), friend of Harriet Martineau and Frances Power Cobbe. Founded in 1846 a ragged school at Bristol, and later (with financial help from Lady Byron and others) reformatory schools for young delinquents at the same place. Was the author of various works on education and the treatment of paupers and criminals. (See "Dictionary of National Biography," Vol. III.)

guided by her brother-in-law, Dr. Lushington, now past eighty years of age, who, as Lady Byron's life-long legal adviser, was inclined to assume a kind of pontifical authority in all that concerned her memory. To such a tribunal Wentworth and his sister were mere children, to be kept as long as possible from the knowledge of their elders' secrets. They must have been well aware of this attitude of mind, and no organised effort seems to have been made by them to gain possession of their family records until the autumn of 1865—five years after Lady Byron's death. That there had, however, already been some discussions on the subject with the trustees is proved by the following fragment of a letter from Wentworth to his sister :—

*To Lady Anne Isabella Noel King.<sup>1</sup>*

I saw Mr. Ford yesterday. I introduced the subject of the papers in the keeping of the three trustees, (and) after some conversation we agreed that steps should be taken in writing. I gave him instructions in your name as well as in mine to write to each of the three trustees, saying that you and I agreed that we ought to know those events in our family which are recorded in my grandmother's papers, and that we claim for ourselves as her descendants the right to examine and peruse the whole of them. No doubt Dr. Lushington will intrigue against us, and after Miss Carr has received Ford's

<sup>1</sup> Lord Lovelace, as life tenant of the Noel estates in right of his dead wife, had assumed that name for himself and his children, in addition to their patronymic of King.

letter, which will not be for the next week or two, you may perhaps get from her a powerfully worded appeal entreating you not to ask to know what you of all persons should shrink from knowing. However, she may very possibly be too honourable to attempt to detach you from me, but I feel great distrust of Dr. Lushington's influence, as his mind is long ago made up on this matter, and in a sense quite opposed to my grandmother's wishes. Miss Carpenter *may* be a useful ally, but I am afraid she is desirous of knowing all herself and is fond of power. She and Mr. Bathurst are perhaps accessible to reason, though they may not at once consent. If they do we shall have to coerce Miss Carr. Ford will send you a copy of the letter as soon as he writes it, but as he would not like to suggest . . . (*fragment ends*).

In the beginning of 1866 Wentworth's desire to obtain possession of the papers was further sharpened by advice from his lawyers, that in his position as ultimate heir to his grandmother's estates it was important that he should possess certain information as to some family events in the year 1815. A request to be allowed to examine Lady Byron's correspondence for that year was declined by the trustees, and long and earnest pleadings made on his behalf and his sister's by their legal adviser and friend, Mr. Gerard Ford,<sup>1</sup> proved entirely fruitless, except for betrayal of the fact that the trustees were not altogether at one among themselves. In a memorandum addressed by Miss Carpenter to her

<sup>1</sup> Of the firm of Elwes, Carpenter & Ford.

co-trustees on August 23rd, 1866, of which she sent a copy to Mr. Ford, she says :—

. . . the clear intentions of Lady Byron in regard to the papers committed to us have not yet been fulfilled, and ought to be so at the earliest possible opportunity, viz.: that we should as a preliminary step give such examination of the papers as will enable us to form a judgment on them.

. . . there exist among the papers directions in her own hand as to the publication of certain documents which leave us no choice as to our duty in doing so.

My own general judgment is as follows. The papers may be divided into different classes—

1st. Those which are the special object of the Trust, namely, such as contain records of family history of a private character. . . .

She then describes three other classes of papers, and resumes :—

The first (class) should be the subject of most careful consideration. I believe that many of these papers ought to be destroyed because they contain records of evil *which ought never to be disclosed to anyone.*<sup>1</sup> . . .

The situation was complicated by the fact that Miss Carpenter was at that time on the eve of a journey to India. Under the terms of the will the trustees could only act in concert with each other,

<sup>1</sup> Miss Carpenter's italics.

and her absence must necessarily cause a deadlock. Accordingly, now for many months silence set in.

Early in 1868 appeared "the Guiccioli compilation," as Wentworth called it, under the title "Lord Byron jugé par les Témoin de sa Vie." No author's name was given, but when the English translation came out a few months later it was openly spoken of in the public press as the work of Byron's mistress, the Countess Guiccioli, now Marquise de Boissy. This wretched book carried the antidote to its many falsehoods within itself, in its extreme tediousness. But, however much they might despise such a work, Lady Byron's descendants could not be indifferent to the retelling in it of all the old fictions about Byron's married life, and the painting of an especially vile picture of his unhappy wife. Once more the country girl of twenty-three was held up to odium for having failed in her one short year of marriage to reform a professed libertine, who was also a great genius. She was described as cold, narrow, incapable of understanding her poet, etc., etc., and those who loved her knew her to have adored his poetry and himself—while she had over and over again forgiven his libertinism. Must such things be suffered for ever in silence? Was there no remedy? The answer could only be found in Lady Byron's own story of her sorrows and in the other records that she was known to have kept. Only after careful study of these would it be possible to determine whether

justice could be done to her memory without that full disclosure of one tragic fact, which all who knew it, at that time, felt to be impossible.

Once more Mr. Ford was set to work to argue with and urge the trustees, together and separately. Lady Byron's heirs remembered with anxiety the dictum of Miss Carpenter in 1866 that some of the papers should be destroyed. They now endeavoured to obtain a promise that at least this should not be done without their concurrence. In vain. Long and weary correspondence set in. The two elderly ladies lived respectively at Bristol and in Surrey; their colleague was a busy professional man in London. They could always parry all enquiries and suggestions by declaring that for the present it was impossible for them to confer together. Some signs of weakening, however, they began to show. Wentworth was now twenty-nine, and even the octogenarian Dr. Lushington must have acknowledged his claim to be permitted to investigate circumstances intimately affecting his family honour. Once more Miss Mary Carpenter expressed herself as not only willing but anxious to give time (under her circumstances a real sacrifice) to that thorough examination of the papers which was the necessary preliminary to any surrender of them. Her friendship with Lady Byron had been real and close, and it was to her that Lady Byron had written from her deathbed to confide the memorials of her life. It was no wonder

that the moral obligations involved in this trust would seem to have been realised by her more keenly and intimately than by her coadjutors. She now in August, 1868, came up from Bristol to London, and by consent of Miss Carr she and Mr. Bathurst spent some days in examination of the papers. The result was that they gave up a small portion of them to the heirs, but the concession was so inadequate that once more Wentworth found himself obliged to remonstrate. I have before me a long and earnest letter that he wrote to Mr. Bathurst, in which he pleaded that the three trustees were all "strangers in blood" to Lord and Lady Byron, and that there was no reason to think that the latter ever intended that her own descendants should be permanently superseded in the exercise of their natural rights and duties.

He had prevailed at last. On October 15th, 1868, the principal bulk of the papers, including all Lady Byron's MSS. then in the trustees' hands "bearing upon her union with and separation from Lord Byron," were delivered up to him.

A project had long been more or less vaguely formed in Wentworth's mind, and warmly supported by some of Lady Byron's surviving friends, of endeavouring to depict her personal life and character while leaving aside as far as possible the story of her marriage and separation. To a small circle of intimates her character while she lived and her memory after death were almost a religion. They con-

sidered that by her intellectual distinction and rare nobility of character, as well as by the generous and whole-hearted support that she gave to all kinds of charitable and philanthropic objects, she had earned the right to her own niche in the temple of fame. Some idea of the personal magnetism that she had exercised may be gathered from the following description, found in a fragment of autobiography left by her cousin Robert Noel,<sup>1</sup> her junior by about ten years :—

I looked up to her with admiration and in a spirit of veneration, and I found a peculiar fascination in her beautiful diction and in the calm earnest way she had of expressing her sentiments and opinions. Her views on practical subjects, especially those relating to the characters of others and what might be expected of them in the future, always impressed me as if they had been spoken by an oracle, and it never entered my head to criticise anything she said, or to doubt the soundness of her judgments.

However, in his eager study of the long coveted papers, Wentworth's mind was for the moment far from being occupied in composing the sober narrative of a virtuous life. The story of that forbidden

<sup>1</sup> Robert Ralph Noel, born 1803, died 1883, major, Leicestershire Militia, a distinguished phrenologist, author of "Physical Basis of Mental Life," "Notes illustrating a Collection of Casts," and other works.

His collection of casts, made from the heads of many persons of note, and also of prominent criminals, is now in the possession of the Francis Galton Eugenic Society, University College, London.

period of 1814—16, which was *not* to be given to the public, was all-absorbing. First he had to make his own judgment, as to the guilt or innocence of Byron and Augusta. Secondly, to reconcile his own mental picture of the tender guardian of his childhood, the loving mother, the steadfast friend, the living embodiment of generosity and liberal ideas, with the hateful portrait traced of her by her own husband, and with his cruel accusation of her as “the moral Clytemnestra of her lord.” And the interest of her character was made more poignant to him by the knowledge that the prejudices born of her bitter experience had been all-powerful in shaping his own youthful life. His own letters may now take up the tale.

*To Lady Anne Isabella Noel King.*

86, ST. JAMES'S STREET, S.W.

*Thursday, November 5th, 1868.*

Yesterday I had a conversation with — in which he spoke of A. I. B.<sup>1</sup> as a narrow methodical systematiser quite incapable of sympathising with a man like Byron. “She had formed a rigid theory of morality and religion which she most intolerantly forced on herself and everyone who came near her. B. would have been happy with a woman of a lower but more amiable character who would have bent herself to his will and who had a *sensual* love for him.” X. spoke with indulgent contempt of B.’s Calvinistic belief as caused merely by want of such scientific

enlightenment as X is so ready to impart in season and out of season—considers Lady B. perfectly wrong not to be convinced that morality is entirely dependent on time and place.

There was a genuine though unconscious aversion that must long have been in his mind against his kind friend—I told you once that Miss Montgomery<sup>1</sup> had once used to me a few bitter words of condemnation of his feelings about her.

I think you and I both know there were traits of imperfection in her character, but such an atrocious perversion of her real qualities as he wished to pass off for truth will prevent me from ever consenting to renew the subject with him. I told him so. I fear with too much expression of the anger and pain I really felt. He says he is aware of the “cause of separation,” meaning I suppose, Augusta. He said the present Sir F. Doyle had told him ; and he agreed with me as to Dr. Lushington’s (influence) in preventing any reconciliation. I myself do not believe Augusta was the cause of her leaving B.: but that she thought it her duty to shun the moral temptation with which she herself was beset, and she felt horror at the idea B. might become answerable for her moral destruction. This X. is incapable of seeing. . . .

*To the same.*

LONDON,

*Thursday, November 19th, 1868.*

This evening I have been to a drama made out of Victor Hugo’s “Outcasts.” I think too much is

<sup>1</sup> See note p. 9

sacrificed to scenery in the pieces now played. Their authors seem to try and diverge as widely as possible from the old unities of time and place, which I think may sometimes be very advantageously kept. After seeing it a few times, that constant change of scene loses its charm, but good acting (especially where accompanied by good looks) grows in fascination every time. The public applaud sentiments they approve of vulgarly delivered, quite as much as good acting, and scenic effects such as the burning of a house with real fire—which we had to-night—more than either. . . .

In a later letter :—

What has disgusted me beyond all here (London) was a week's "amusement" at the theatres. . . .

*To the same.*

*Thursday, November 26th, 1868.*

As for the wish to find relations in the right I do not understand how lovers of truth could prefer to make them out either better or worse than they actually were. It could be no pleasure to persuade oneself that friends had merits unexisting in fact or to fabricate evil deeds for "mine enemy." None but a fool could desire to believe in illusions, and none but a knave to make others believe them.

*To the same.*

36, St. JAMES'S STREET, S.W.

*Tuesday, February 16th, 1869.*

I send you *The Times* review of the Guiccioli compilation—it is by Mrs. Norton—it is perhaps the

ablest. It is too hostile to B. for my taste, though not so violent as the abuse of A. I. B. in the work itself.

I mean to be presented at the levee on March 5th by Lord Granville, as the Queen herself is present. I was determined never to go till she should hold one herself, and the new court dress makes it less ridiculous. Lord de Tabley inquired about you. Of ladies there was a large but not a brilliant array.<sup>1</sup> I should think 100 peers were sworn to-day, four of us at a time, rapidly repeating the short oath, holding the N.T. between our four hands and at the words "kiss the book" pretending to do so. I don't know what I promised to believe or to do; the clerk was galloping over the words, as if at family prayers, and all I remember is that the two majesties were brought together. . . .

*To the same.*

86, St. JAMES'S STREET, S.W.

*Friday, March 5th, 1869.*

I have been with Major Noel this evening. He has heard on two occasions (the last a few weeks before A. I. B.'s death) the same history as Sir F. Doyle about *E. M. L.*,<sup>2</sup> who was so kindly received by her (Lady Byron) at Esher, and who left her in 1843 and died afterwards in the south of France of consumption. He has kindly undertaken to write all he can remember, as well as what he believes to have been her feelings as to B. and the past. He

<sup>1</sup> At the House of Lords.

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Medora Leigh, born April, 1814. (Refer "Astarte,"

said he could not get rid of the impression made by his last conversation with her—that she lingered regretfully over the past, as if half sorry that the separation was accepted by her. She was thinking deeply of B.'s dying but unuttered message to her.

*To the same.*

*Wednesday, March 17th, 1869.*

I will not delay informing you that the promised letters to Mrs. Villiers<sup>1</sup> have just been sent by Mr. Villiers Lister of the Foreign Office. Among them are twenty-eight letters of 1816, which give precise and complete information as to *everything*, letters of the following years in continuation of the same subject, none from 1832 to 1851, and twenty-three very confidential letters of 1852—3. . . . Altogether the trustees, etc., may find that they are checkmated. But I shall not *now* communicate to them the recovery of these treasures, which for the year 1816 probably exceed in importance all that they have reserved. We can go to them at any time we please, and say that as they have pleased themselves by trying to act independently of us, we shall in future, if we please to publish or suppress, not consult them at all. . . . Having read the Villiers letters I find that Augusta is not put in too painful a light for publication, if it be decided to publish the facts at all. Some omissions would be necessary, I think, as to deeds B. was thought to have intended but never carried out. Augusta seems to have very strongly asserted innocence *after* 1814 (though the circumstances were

<sup>1</sup> Hon. Mrs. George Villiers (1775—1856), intimate friend of

very suspicious) but admitted previous error. But then Augusta seems to have thought there was no harm (or small) in any action, provided the intention were not vicious and other persons were not made unhappy. Mr. Lister says he has a few more letters in the country and will send in the course of the summer. They probably refer to Elizabeth Medora Leigh.

Augusta's character is more sympathetic through what I have read than from what I knew before—but a character not to be trusted.

*To the same.*

*Thursday, March 18th, 1869.*

• • • •  
*Friday.* Edward Noel<sup>1</sup> and Ross here to lunch —E. N. much startled that she (Lady Byron) should have ever wavered in her belief in Augusta's continuance in the same course for the whole time, for he had heard that *she* was witness of a scene . . . which could *hardly* receive any other interpretation. This immediately preceded if it did not cause the departure, and was (so I understood E. N.) what gave rise to the resolution not to come back. In E. N.'s opinion (and mine), there was a certain implacability of character which forces us to allow the use of the word "unforgiving." Ross could not deny this, and is, I think, coming to see that her disposition and acts ought not, and cannot, be made out to be absolutely perfect. He sees certainly that to follow

<sup>1</sup> Edward Noel, son of Rev. T. Noel, rector of Kirkby Mallory, brother of Miss Roberta Noel. (See note, p. 17.)

a blind impulse to "defend" and make out a good case would do much harm even for that object. . . .

Ross<sup>1</sup> says the story as repeated from Sir F. Doyle would have been blurted out in print already, but for an endeavour (I believe his), to stop it for the present by hinting that an authentic work was promised. As my inclinations for long have not been averse to telling, I do not wish to lay too much weight on the reasons for [it] but E. Noel has taken these papers with him to study, and I should rely quite on his opinion what is *right* to do. As to the expediency, there would surely be some unpleasant talk as to *our* agency in producing the truth. There would be much difficulty in saying as much *only* as she wished to be said, and I am sure the mystery would do harm. Dr. Lushington and Miss Carr are so far consistent when they assert the difficulty or impossibility of picking and choosing what to tell, if one begins at all. They say "*tout ou rien*," so say I, but without at once deciding which—but it costs them not a moment's hesitation to decree according to the Doctor's inclination, without troubling themselves too much for reasons. Fortunately, his will commands no obedience from us . . . he does not like to feel the subject slipping out of his hands. His

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Alexander Ross (afterwards D.D.), who had begun life as a Presbyterian minister, and later taken orders in the Church of England. At this time he was vicar of St. Philip's, Stepney. In H. Crabb Robinson's diary he is mentioned (February, 1851) as follows:—"The interesting man of the party was Ross, the Presbyterian minister, with whom I had much talk on theology, more indeed than would seem right; but I am told that we interested the company. Ross is learned in German theology, and a great admirer, as well as friend, of Julius Hare. Therefore liberal beyond the ordinary measure allowed to the ministers of the Church."

original advice never to be reconciled does not to me recommend his views. If anything is said, I must put in condemnation and *reprobation* of the part he took, according to his own admission. Sir Ralph and Lady Noel were also wrong, though excusable, in opposing reunion.

Mr. Ross had been for some time desirous of editing a collection of Lady Byron's letters. He had himself been a constant correspondent of hers during the last decade of her life, mainly on religious questions, on which they were in close sympathy. He had also at different intervals acted as tutor to Wentworth himself, who retained a great esteem for him. The papers of H. Crabb Robinson, the diarist, and of the Rev. Frederick Robertson, the famous preacher of Brighton, were now being prepared for publication. Both had been friends of Lady Byron, and Mr. Ross played a friendly and helpful part as intermediary between Wentworth and their respective executors with regard to the possible publication and disposal of her letters to them. The idea of revealing Lady Byron's character by means of her correspondence was now taking definite shape in Wentworth's mind, and collaboration with Mr. Ross had almost been agreed to by both, when the current of events swept him away in a new direction. For both him and his sister the year 1869 was one of far-reaching change. On June 8th Anne Isabella Noel King was married to Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, and on August 25th

Wentworth himself married Fanny, daughter of the Rev. George Heriot.

Of this marriage it is enough to say that within two years Wentworth found it necessary to separate himself abruptly from his wife. He never saw her again.

## CHAPTER II

### MRS. BEECHER STOWE'S STORY

**I**T was on September 1st, 1869, that Mrs. Beecher Stowe's<sup>1</sup> so-called "True Story of Lady Byron's Life" was published simultaneously in England and America,<sup>2</sup> and it was, therefore, in the midst of an absorbing crisis in his own life that the bomb-shell exploded at Wentworth's feet. Mrs. Stowe wrote to refute the falsehoods long current about Lady Byron's married life and repeated in the Guiccioli book, the English translation of which she stated "sells rapidly, and appears to meet with universal favour." Her pages burn with an honest indignation which commands respect, and though they contain various mistakes and inaccuracies, and though her excessive eulogy of her subject and corresponding vituperation of Lord Byron offend our English taste, they are for the most part true. Here are the words with which she electrified the public : "He (Byron) fell into the depths of a secret adulterous intrigue with a blood relation, so near in consanguinity that discovery must have been utter ruin and expulsion from civilised society."

<sup>1</sup> Author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," "Dred," etc., etc.

<sup>2</sup> In *Macmillan's Magazine* and in the *Atlantic Monthly*.

Her account of how this revelation was made to her is as follows :—

On the occasion of a second visit to England, in 1856, the writer received a note from Lady Byron, indicating that she wished to have some private confidential conversation upon important subjects, and inviting her for that purpose to spend a day with her at her country-seat near London.

The writer went and spent a day with Lady Byron alone, and the object of the visit was explained to her. Lady Byron was in such a state of health that her physicians had warned her that she had very little time to live. She was engaged in those duties and reviews which every thoughtful person finds necessary, who is coming deliberately and with open eyes to the boundaries of this mortal life.

At that time there was a cheap edition of Byron's works in contemplation, intended to bring his writings into circulation among the masses, and the pathos arising from the story of his domestic misfortunes would doubtless have greatly aided in giving it currency.

Under these circumstances, some of Lady Byron's friends had proposed the question to her, *whether she had not a responsibility to society for the truth*; whether *she did right* to allow these writings to gain influence over the popular mind, by giving a silent consent to what she knew to be utter falsehoods.

As Lady Byron's whole life had been passed in the most heroic self-abnegation and self-sacrifice, the question was now proposed to her, whether one more act of self-denial was not required of her, before leaving this world, which she had so nobly

truth, no matter at what expense to her own feelings.

For this purpose it was her desire to recount the whole history to a person of another country, and entirely out of the whole sphere of personal and local feelings, which might be supposed to influence those in the country and station of life where the events really happened, in order that she might be helped by such a person's views in making up an opinion as to her own duty.

The interview had almost the solemnity of a death-bed avowal. Lady Byron recounted the history which has been embodied in this article, and gave to the writer a paper containing a brief memorandum of the whole with the date affixed.

It may be noted that Mrs. Stowe did not claim to have had permission or direction from Lady Byron to make the story public.

The uproar caused by Mrs. Stowe's publication was indescribable. The September number of *Macmillan's Magazine* had been but a few hours in the booksellers' shops before a stream of letters had begun to flow into the newspaper offices. For many weeks whole sheets of *The Times* and other important dailies were filled with correspondence. Weekly and monthly publications followed suit with long articles, and comments signed and unsigned. The prevailing note was unmeasured condemnation of Mrs. Stowe and determination to disbelieve the accusation, which, as was generally recognised, could only refer

to Byron's relations with his half-sister Augusta (Mrs. Leigh), daughter of Captain John Byron by his first marriage—Byron himself having been born four years later by a second marriage.<sup>1</sup>

But Lady Byron did not escape her share of blame. Even those who did not discredit the story could not endure that it should have been told ; and it seemed as though her long life of patience and silence under calumny counted as nothing against the fact that, when nearing her end, she had dared to discuss with a friend *in confidence* the possibility of obtaining justice in the eyes of posterity—especially her own posterity. And the story had been so badly told that criticism of details and charges of distorted imagination or memory were absolutely invited by it.

“A great deal of it,” said Dr. Lushington, “was untrue and could not have been stated by Lady Byron.”<sup>2</sup>

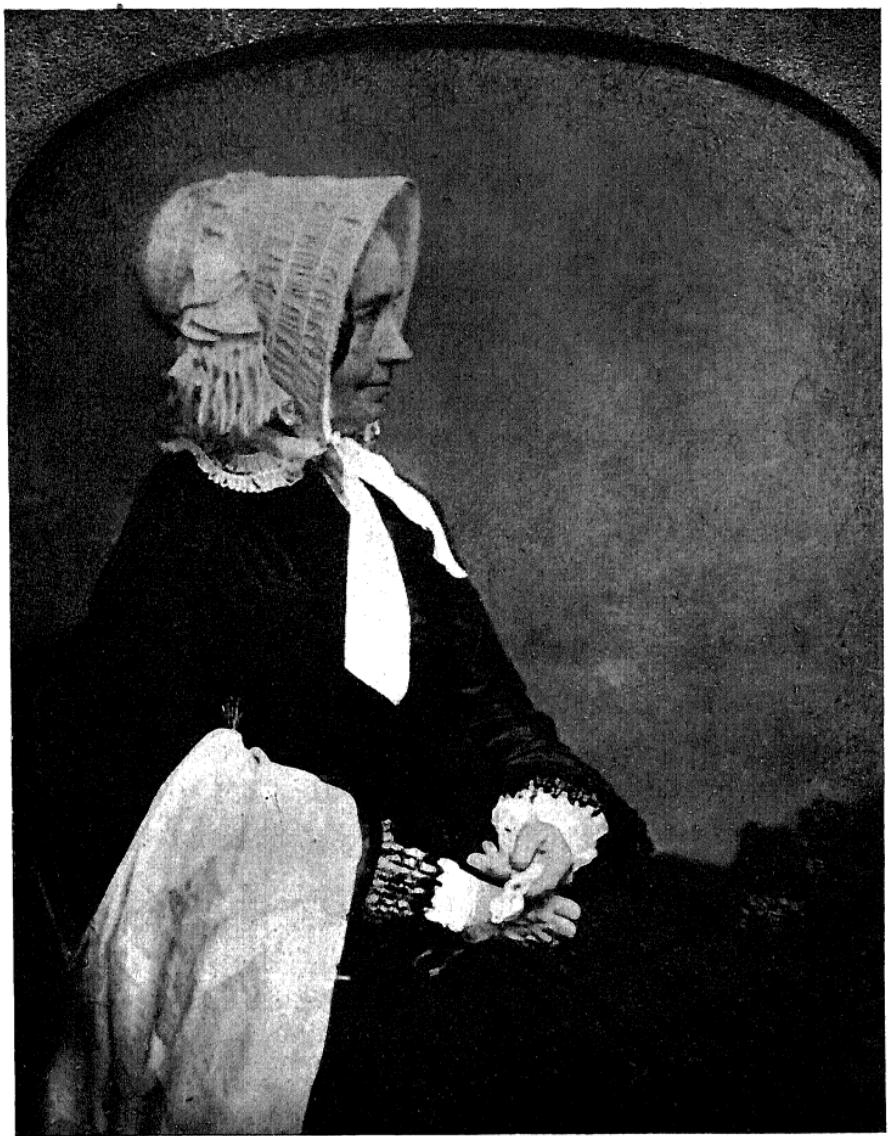
Wentworth wrote in later years :<sup>3</sup>

The article in the *Atlantic Monthly* stated not untruly that the mystery of Astarte in “*Manfred*” was founded on fact, and (erroneously) that those circumstances had continued, and been the direct cause of the separation.

<sup>1</sup> Captain John Byron married, first, Amelia D'Arcy, Baroness Conyers in her own right, divorced wife of the Marquess of Carmarthen (afterwards fifth Duke of Leeds). Lady Conyers died January 26th, 1784, in giving birth to a daughter, Augusta Mary Byron, who married, in August, 1807, Colonel George Leigh.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to William, Earl of Lovelace, September, 1869.

<sup>3</sup> “*Astarte*,” pp. 39—41.



LADY BYRON IN HER OLD AGE



Recollections of interviews are not evidence against a person reported, except by consent and with other reserves. Those who quote confidential matter without leave may discredit themselves but really commit no one else. The most uncertain of hearsays are conversations long afterwards imputed posthumously, as was done here by Mrs. Beecher Stowe nine years after Lady Byron's death. And yet every error of fact that was either found or imagined in the apocryphal version of Lady Byron's story, was attributed to her, contrary to truth and probability. Failure of memory was far more likely in Mrs. Stowe than in Lady Byron. No doubt it was proper to credit Mrs. Stowe with as much good faith as was consistent with her undeniable treachery, but under such conditions her accuracy was at least doubtful, whilst Lady Byron's veracity never was doubted by careful and unprejudiced minds. Lord Byron himself averred that she was "truth itself." It was a misplaced delicacy towards Mrs. Beecher Stowe to pass over her untrustworthiness so lightly, and beg the whole question by pretending that the rancour of misfortune had falsified Lady Byron's memory.

Lady Byron was unquestionably entitled to be silent or speak as she thought fit about her history. She was free of all obligations, whether moral or material, to any other human being, but could not evade having to decide what should ultimately become of the records. She was perfectly justified in making confidences to any friend whose opinion or sympathy she valued. . . .

Mrs. Beecher Stowe's character and genius had

received universal recognition, which was almost deserved. She only wanted two or three of the more unobtrusive virtues : accuracy, fidelity, good taste and tact, for lack of which she unconsciously turned traitor like the other publicists who busied themselves about Lord Byron. Her miserable puff of Lady Byron was no madder or baser than countless advertisements of Lord Byron which provoked no uproar. But as soon as Lady Byron's narrative had been robbed, perverted, and sold to her enemies, great was the cawing in the rookery. . . .

Some slight warning of what was in preparation had reached Wentworth through Mr. Ross on August 23rd, and endeavours were made on his behalf to induce Messrs. Macmillan to suspend the publication, at least for a time. It, was, however, already too late. On August 27th the ever faithful Mr. Ford obtained an advance copy of *Macmillan's Magazine* and went down with it to Dover, where his client was staying with his bride on his way to the Continent. Wentworth's first feeling was one of overwhelming indignation with Mrs. Stowe, and he thankfully acquiesced in Mr. Ford's proposal to write in the name of his firm to discredit the story to the uttermost. Accordingly, on September 2nd, there appeared a long letter to *The Times*, in which Messrs. Wharton and Ford, "as the family solicitors beg most distinctly to state that the article is not a complete or authentic statement of the facts connected with the narrative of Mrs. Stowe,"

Lady Byron's own statement, and that it does not involve any direct evidence on Lady Byron's history." And so on, with a great deal about Mrs. Beecher Stowe's breach of trust, her inaccuracy and her entire lack of documents, and with some information as to the existence of important papers in the hands of trustees. On this letter *The Times* editorial comment was :—

. . . We need hardly express our belief that Messrs. Wharton and Ford would not come forward in the matter as they have done unless they had ample grounds for doing so. If, therefore, they distinctly contradicted Mrs. Stowe's assertion, we confess we should be inclined to prefer their evidence to hers, as the more likely to be accurate. But for these very reasons it seems to us a significant fact that, though thus coming forward apparently in direct opposition to Mrs. Stowe, and manifesting the greatest anxiety to discredit her story, Messrs. Wharton and Ford do not, nevertheless, altogether contradict it. . . .

What more could Lady Byron's family do ? Even if they could have forgiven Mrs. Stowe's act of treachery and have brought themselves to endorse her revelations, not one of them had at that time access to the whole of the available evidence. Amid the hurricane that had been raised, only the fullest and most clear-cut of narratives would have carried conviction. No one person could then have produced it.

As to action by the trustees,<sup>1</sup>

Besides other obstacles which had nothing to do with the merits of the case, though they caused great inconvenience, the term of thirty years fixed by Lady Byron in 1850 stood in the way of reparation to her for ten years more. "Procrastinator's argument, 'wait a little, this is not the time,'<sup>2</sup> still reigned for another decade before it could be displaced, though every remaining reason for silence might drop away. And as circumstances change in one way, the guardians of truth change in another. They grow old and cautious about facing trouble and odium, and repeat with more obstinacy than ever: 'The time has not yet come!' And it never does come if they can keep it off. Blind silence becomes an end in itself—identified with their very being" . . .

As will be seen from Wentworth's narrative (see "Astarte," pp. 135, 136), Lady Byron left her husband's house, *first* because he commanded her to go, *second* because, believing him to be at least temporarily insane, she thought that her absence was necessary for his restoration. It was therefore easy, in reply to direct questions, to affirm that she did not leave her husband because of Mrs. Leigh; and thus for many years the family, when driven to the wall, were wont to defend themselves against the prying multitude. To be compelled to such subterfuges was in itself misery. And for years to come, those whose family history was subjected to incessant dissection

<sup>1</sup> "Astarte," pp. 65—66.

and outrage felt themselves to be standing with heads bowed and bare to the storm, buffeted and drenched and helpless. To his dying day Wentworth never forgot the bitter experience.

Among the many publications on this theme in 1869—70, two stand out as specially important—a series of five or six articles in the *Saturday Review*,<sup>1</sup> and two essays in the *Quarterly Review*.<sup>2</sup> The writer in the *Saturday Review* says of Mrs. Stowe's story, "We are sorry to say that we believe it to be the true one," and renders homage to a previous anonymous writer who, in the *Temple Bar Magazine*,<sup>3</sup> three months before Mrs. Stowe's publication, had "in an article remarkable for ability, good taste and right feeling," pointed to the probability of some such cause as was now revealed for Lord Byron's separation from his wife. The analysis in the *Saturday Review* of all the circumstances then known, and comparison of them with Byron's own writings, very brilliantly and closely reasoned, was thought at the time to be by some eminent lawyer. The conclusions were not determined by any bias in favour of Lady Byron, of whom it is written: "her character is very unique, very unintelligible, and one with which as we have no sympathy, so about it we have little

<sup>1</sup> September 4th to December 25th, 1869.

<sup>2</sup> October, 1869, and January, 1870.

<sup>3</sup> "Lord Byron's Married Life": *Temple Bar*, June, 1869. Published later with other matter under the title of "Vindication of J. J. Rawlinson," Bentley, 1871.

knowledge." Wentworth sought in vain both at that time, and in later years, to learn by whom these articles had been written. He printed large extracts from them in the appendix to "Astarte," and he wrote of them :—

These able and eloquent pages are still of interest, being one of the few bright spots in a dreary tangle of misrepresentation. It would be unfortunate if the identity of the acute Saturday essayist were lost now that former services to a just cause ought to be recognised. . . .

Later he learnt, on the authority of Mr. Swinburne, that the writer was Mrs. Lynn Linton.

In great contrast with these were the articles in the *Quarterly Review*, the author's name, Abraham Hayward, being from the first an open secret. No impartiality here! They were an avowed and thoroughgoing defence of Lord Byron, coupled with unsparing condemnation of his accuser. The reader is reminded of the old legal story of the counsel who noted on his brief: "No case—abuse the plaintiff's attorney." Not only by the ability displayed in them, but by their semi-official character, put forward as they were by the successors of Byron's publisher, John Murray, and their references to private documents, they made a profound impression on the public.

<sup>1</sup> The proprietor of the *Quarterly Review* contrived

to raise a contribution of materials suitable for his purpose from the residuary legatee of the person whose character was under discussion, that is to say, Lord Byron's half-sister Augusta (the Hon. Mrs. Leigh). She had left behind her, all ready and arranged, a small collection of carefully selected documents calculated to rebut the charge that had been expected and prepared for all through her life. With suicidal blindness to ultimate consequences, the Leigs joined in the plan for the ruin of Lady Byron's character. . . .

The choice of Abraham Hayward as counsel meant much, for his utility in a bad cause was never impaired by any tendency to straightforward fairness, but he was perhaps seldom quite trusted by his employers.<sup>1</sup>

In the Byron discussions he surpassed himself in the licence with which he manipulated all the information he could acquire. His office was like that of an Old Bailey lawyer, who receives no confessions and may be very imperfectly acquainted with the facts, but avers his client's innocence as a matter of course. He acted just as might be expected from a specialist of his description, when employed to make

<sup>1</sup> I cannot refrain from a word in Hayward's defence here, for I saw him often in his old age in the house of Mr. Gladstone, where he was a familiar *habitué*, and elsewhere. He could be a staunch friend, and those to whom he was attached certainly trusted him. His defence as regards the Byron articles would have been the familiar morality of the paid advocate, to whom every weapon is legitimate that will serve him in the fight. But there is no doubt he was also unconsciously biased by the feeling common to all literary men of his generation. They adored Byron's genius. He had been the idol of their youth, and to see his image in the mire roused them to fury and blinded them to all

the most of garbled extracts from an immense correspondence to invalidate a particular fact, which those same papers would completely prove if fairly and frankly produced. He was presented to the public with unusual ostentation as Lady Byron's exterminator. His employers freely abdicated all responsibility, loaded it on to him and retired from the scene. It was a virtual assumption by Hayward of other liabilities than his own ; and like all such transfers of credit, to a large extent misleading. Hayward could not have been the real inventor of all that was put in or left out of the articles. He took what was given him. The vast suppression of material can only very partially have been his doing. And many things that were included—highly questionable suppositions, suggestions and assertions, may also not have been his own.

In the *Quarterly Review* articles he was most himself as Mrs. Leigh's advocate, but his mode of representing her cause was sinister. He founded his defence of her moral character on brutal physical depreciation. Ugliness proved chastity ; the surest evidence of vice being beauty. Hayward's studies of dead roués for knowledge on the eternal subject of women had left him with the notion that no woman is virtuous if she can help it. With logical simplicity he set to work and exculpated Mrs. Leigh from the charge of incest by robbing her of identity, almost of sex, and competence for any sort of love passion. Like the deformities invented by Professor Wilson's friends to deface Hazlitt, Mrs. Leigh's supposed unloveliness was purely imaginary. . . .

Great indulgence would be due to Mrs. Leigh's ar-

descendants if they had spoken out in her exculpation, however bitterly or unfairly. In their position perfect and absolute good faith and good temper could hardly be expected from them. But the manufacture of infamy for Lady Byron was not properly speaking their act. They were not people to disregard all decencies of conduct and language about her. They sought to fortify their own discretion by consulting their cousin, the third Earl of Chichester,<sup>1</sup> as kind and honourable an adviser as could be desired. He was of course liable to be deceived about the character of his aunt, Mrs. Leigh ; nor was it wonderful that the truth should have been repugnant to him, and that he would not understand and could not like perfect justice towards Lady Byron. He had not, however, forgotten what had been feelingly expressed by his mother, Mrs. Leigh's half-sister,<sup>2</sup> that some gratitude and respect were due to Lady Byron from the Leights. . . .

The plan of campaign against Lady Byron's character was neither devised nor managed by any of the Byrons or their representatives, kindred or connections. . . .

If Lady Byron's family rejoiced in the castigation of Mrs. Stowe, they felt Hayward's articles as a whole to be intolerable ; and for Wentworth the appearance of the second one (which followed on a further

<sup>1</sup> In "Astarte" he is wrongly named as the *second* earl.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Leigh's mother, Lady Conyers, had issue by her first marriage (see note, p. 30), George, sixth Duke of Leeds, Lord Francis Godolphin Osborne, and Mary, wife of the second Earl of Chichester. The third earl, referred to above, was the son of the

amplification of the original story, "Lady Byron Vindicated," by Harriet Beecher Stowe, 1870) gave cause for a new uneasiness. In this Hayward made references to, and citations from, obviously important papers, such as had hitherto been believed to exist only in the trustees' hands. Where had he found these? Doubt and anxiety on this subject were to torment Wentworth for many years to come. For some time it had become evident to him that the documents in the care of the trustees were after all not so exhaustive as had been expected. It now seemed certain that some portion of Lady Byron's papers must have been abstracted and got into other hands. When? And how? His suspicions were not long in going to the right quarter, and circumstances came to light as time went on which made these suspicions certainties. It suffices to say here that, in 1893, a box containing extremely important letters, and other records of Lady Byron's married life and her relations with Mrs. Leigh, was found to have been in the possession of William, Earl of Lovelace. It was handed over on his death to Wentworth by his personal heirs, and its contents furnished a large part of the material for the book "Astarte," which he eventually wrote. Wentworth's own printed record of this matter was as follows<sup>1</sup> :—

Most improperly and unfortunately he (Hayward) was permitted to see some of the Byron papers by a

deceased relative of mine, in whose temporary custody they were. Without my knowledge, and what was much worse, without the sanction of the trustees, a lamentable indiscretion was committed, and Hayward got his opportunity to make copious extracts. . . .

But in the year 1870 Wentworth had no possible means of verifying the sources drawn upon by Hayward, or of ascertaining what papers, other than those quoted, might exist in the same hands. He was at this time going through one of those long periods of estrangement which, to the misfortune of both, divided the father and son for a large portion of their joint lives. And even had circumstances been favourable, the task of cross-questioning that formidable personage, old Lord Lovelace, about such a matter could not have been lightly undertaken. If he had confessed to the possession of the papers, which was unlikely, he would assuredly have fiercely defended his right, nay, as he regarded things, his *duty*, to act as seemed to him best in defence of the family honour. It is certain that neither the papers themselves nor surrender in any form would have been got from him.

It was about this time that Wentworth was allowed access to an, as yet, untouched mine of information on Byron's private life—namely, the poet's own intimate letters to Lady Melbourne,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Milbanke, Viscountess Melbourne, mother of the Duke of Wellington.

from the year 1812 to the date of his marriage in 1815. These letters, together with other papers and relics, had been inherited by Mrs. Dudley Carleton (afterwards Lady Dorchester) from her father, John Cam Hobhouse, Lord Broughton, Byron's friend and executor. Wentworth was permitted by her to take copies of the whole series, which he did with extreme care and accuracy, the labour being spread over a considerable space of time, and the letters themselves were seen and studied at the time by his sister and her husband, Wilfrid Blunt.

These letters, familiar, witty, extraordinarily vivid, are among the best that Byron ever wrote. For nearly three years they give a continuous and detailed narrative of his movements, his social doings, and especially his love affairs. In describing his relations with various married women, those who resisted him and those who did not, it is plain that neither he nor his correspondent regarded these doings as other than quite natural and legitimate. But from the summer of 1813 onwards a new note is heard. Lady Melbourne is hotly remonstrating about something ; Byron's own conscience is touched. It is plain that no ordinary adultery was in question.<sup>1</sup>

Recognising the extreme importance of such evidence and anxious to secure its preservation, Wentworth made a second copy in his own handwriting, and in later years caused also to be made two type-

written copies, carefully overlooked and corrected by himself. His own first manuscript he gave to a near relative, who still possesses it, the typewritten copies were deposited elsewhere, and his own second manuscript remained in his possession.<sup>1</sup>

For many years, and especially in later life, Lady Dorchester played with the idea of publishing these letters. She used to lament that they were of such a character that no virtuous woman would like to edit them. She also was firmly resolved that nothing which could confirm the story revealed by Mrs. Beecher Stowe should see the light through her. Any drastic "bowdlerising" of the whole series would have been absolutely destructive, but it would have been easy to delete some half a dozen passages which pointed unmistakably to the relations between Byron and Augusta. It was the possibility of some such mutilated publication, and the certainty that it would have been hailed as negative evidence against Lady Byron, that caused Wentworth to expend so much industry and care to secure the existence in safe hands of authentic duplicates of the original letters.

<sup>1</sup> After his death this second set of manuscript copies was demanded by Lady Dorchester from his widow, and to this demand (though not a legal claim) it was thought best to accede rather than offend the owner of the original letters, and of many other Byron relics. The sacrifice was made in vain. Lady Dorchester was not propitiated, and all the Byron relics in her possession have now passed away to strangers. Fortunately the other copies described above still exist in the hands to which they

Gradually there came home to him the sense that under existing circumstances he was completely helpless to deal with this matter that concerned him so nearly. In the knowledge that there existed evidence to which he was denied access, he could not even fix his own beliefs with clearness, much less impose them on the world. But all his memories of the noble and scrupulously truthful woman who had reared him, all his instinctive understanding of the mind of her whose blood ran in his veins, and whose teaching had moulded his own character, filled him with revolt against the theory that, brooding incessantly upon her wrongs, she had conceived and promulgated the vilest of calumnies against her husband. As the storm which had followed Mrs. Beecher Stowe's revelations gradually died down, it was upon this theory that the public mind appeared to settle comfortably. There were, of course, a few exceptions, but the courage to assert belief in a story which was widely stigmatised as the prurient invention of a diseased mind was naturally rare. Lady Byron's few surviving friends were all old, and mostly women. All that they could do in her defence was to assert their absolute belief in her sanity and veracity. Who should draw the sword on her behalf? Surely, her one surviving male descendant. On him, and him only, this duty lay. And most heavily upon mind and soul never long to be forgotten rested the

elapse before he found himself at last possessed of the whole truth, at last face to face with a possible decision.

Meanwhile time went on, punctuated at intervals by fresh publications more or less bearing on the "Byron Mystery," mostly ephemeral, but all supremely offensive to those whose family history was thus perpetually analysed and commented on.

## CHAPTER III

### RESTLESSNESS

IN 1872 there began for Wentworth a long period of aimless wandering. His home was broken up, he was harassed by debts that were none of his making, and the scandal which had fallen on his name made all society distasteful to him. He failed to obtain a divorce, but the terms of the legal separation granted to him secured him the custody of the one child of his marriage.<sup>1</sup> He placed her in the care of his sister ; and then, as always, the steadfast affection of that sister was his one unfailing resource and comfort. Sometimes he would take a lodging for a few months in London or Paris, and in either place would live the life of a solitary student, haunting the libraries and curiosity shops, now and then yielding to his one extravagance—the buying of books, but otherwise practising extreme frugality in order to rid himself of his embarrassments. For most of his time he drifted from place to place, in Italy or Austria. It was when summer came, and he could climb mountains and forget himself in the wild beauty of the high places, that he was happiest. A fragment of a

letter to his sister in answer to an invitation to join her and her husband in a journey through Algeria and the Sahara shows how he felt the barrenness of his life at this period.

*To Lady Anne Blunt.*

VIENNA,

*October 14th, 1873.*

• • • •

Your proposal is a very welcome one. I had already made up my mind that I could not endure another winter in England, both on account of climate and (of) harassing discussions which kill one by inches, or rather I should say tend to break up both health and reason. I am very well now, but I am, therefore, only the more unwilling to be ill. I have not strength of mind to put painful topics quite away from my thoughts when I am leading the dull and depressing life of a prisoner.

I am an incurable vagrant in character. I wish it were otherwise, but I get dreadfully tired of any one place if for long there. . . .

Four years later his letters give a more cheerful picture :—

*To Lady Anne Blunt.*

COURMAYEUR,

*Friday, August 3rd, 1877.*

I intended to answer your letter at once, but had no time, or what comes to the same thing. The

of July, hardly a day passing without a fall of snow in the higher Alps, but one gets into a way of lounging about. Then there have been several picnics at places only a few hours distant, the parties consisting chiefly of Piedmontese. The society on the whole is entertaining and agreeable, though it has its defects —petty gossip and jealousies, etc. One or two of the people are charming ; among the ladies actually here present there is only one I should however much care ever to meet again, Madame Caccia of Nice, who is French by education, manners and "*esprit*," but Italian at heart with an intense dislike of her legal nationality . . . Very few of them seem to have any interests except of the most trivial sort. They never touch a book, even a novel. Madame Caccia and an intimate friend of hers, Madame De Filippi, are, however, fond of the best Italian, French, English, and German literature. It is a great astonishment to some of them how two ladies can be dear friends who are natives of such distant places as Nice and Turin.

The majority of the ladies are rather jealous of Madame Caccia's wit, grace and good looks, but they are so bored when left to themselves without her that they have to run after her as she will not run after them. . . .

On Sunday, August 5th, I made the 1st/2nd ascent of the Aiguille de Peuteret, or rather the higher of its two summits—I named it to distinguish it from the lower one, "Aiguille de la Yola," after Mme. Caccia, for whom I first broke off the veritable summit untouched by human foot—so I brought it to her to put her foot on it and so make the first ascent.

—mine being only the second. I planted a white flag with the St. George's cross, and in the middle of the flag I fastened Mme. Caccia's card.

Gianotti said he should call her henceforward Madame de Peuteret, the peak having become the Yola.

I have written a letter to the ex-minister Quintino Sella (actual president of the Club Alpino) describing my ascent for communication to that body. Mme. De Filippi, who is a cousin of his, will forward it with a few lines from herself. . . .

Signor Quintino Sella sent him a complimentary letter in which he said :—

“I sent immediately your very interesting letter to Cav. Baretti, with the purpose that it should be published in the *Bulletino del Club Alpino Italiano* under the head ‘Salita della Cina della Yola.’”

*To Lady Anne Blunt.*

ZERMATT,

*Monday, September 3rd, 1877.*

The only thing I have done here is to go up the Matterhorn last Thursday and down the other side —since then the weather has been cloudy and windy, and I must wait. There are no amusements here—one is thrown on one's own resources. Yesterday I read a charming short story, “Come un sogno,” by Barrili, profoundly sad and yet not depressing—it is so poetical—it seems to have been a great success in Italy, where there seems to be now a beginning of

readable literature. I have also a book of travels in Spain by De Amicis which seems very amusing.

Yesterday at table a parson was talking with another man of a parsonic way of thinking about Tyndall and unbelief. They said "there is such bravado in Tyndall's materialism that it looks as if he were not very firm and convinced in his atheism." How characteristic of the clergy—insincere accusations of insincerity, pretending that the real difficulty is to doubt—not to accept—the orthodox dogmas!

I have the sincerest deepest longing for God and immortality, but the desire alone seems to give little certainty, or even hope. What helps most is to meet with sympathetic people who sympathise in that feeling—but what would drive me farthest away from religious sentiment is to listen to "Christian" cursing of infidelity or "wilful blindness" as they call it. I think the fallacious logic as well as the malignant bitterness of the pious (and perhaps even of the anti-pious) surpasses that of the House of Commons.

I have got Pollen's plan—the house<sup>1</sup> is charming, but I think the stable is perfectible; there is no harness-room. As I shall be in England about the 15th, I shall not try to settle it by post.

I do not mean to leave this before the 11th, perhaps the 12th, and shall then go straight through, only stopping a few hours in Paris. If I go by Newhaven I shall ride<sup>2</sup> thence to Crabbet.

<sup>1</sup> Wentworth House, Chelsea, which Mr. Pollen was to build for him.

*To the same.*

ZERMATT,

*Saturday, September 8th, 1877.*

On Thursday, 6th, I planted a flag made and given to me by Mme. Caccia for that purpose on another virgin summit—the Pointe Giordano of the Jumeaux in Valtornenche, which is more than 13,000 feet high—it had been tried often and is difficult but not very long—for I left the hotel at Brenil at 2 a.m. and reached the summit at 11.30.

On the same day five persons perished on the Lyskamm—two tourists and three guides—the names have been given me as Paterson Noel and Lewis Arnold<sup>1</sup> with the three brothers Knubel of St. Nicholas. All the guides leave widows—one of them confined last night or else expecting it at any moment. One of the gentlemen was married last year—the other has a sister staying at the Riffel Hotel, whence he made the ascent. As they did not return in the evening, yesterday a party of guides went to look for them and found the whole caravan dead—fastened together by their rope—at the foot of a precipice of 200 feet. A cornice of snow on the ridge of the Lyskamm over which they were proceeding must have broken down under them. One of the guides was found almost cut in two by the rope round his waist. Perhaps he had sprung to the other side of the ridge of snow from the one down which they were falling, but was unable to balance the weight of four and was pulled over and down. To-day it was

<sup>1</sup> Noel H. Paterson and William Arnold Lewis. (See *Alpine Journal*, Vol. VIII., p. 346.)

too stormy, so to-morrow a large party is going to fetch the remains.

I am very sorry to hear I shall not see the de H<sup>ü</sup>gels, as I like them particularly.

I had not heard any mention of Sidney Herbert's <sup>1</sup> engagement when I was in London—at his age marrying must be rather a sacrifice of independence, but if she turns out to be one of the few good and clever women in the world he will have more compensation than loss. I believe there are more good women than men—but still so few that if it were pure chance it would be 100 to 1 this is not one, but perhaps Sidney Herbert is a good judge of character and has been intimate enough with her family to foresee that all will be well. I don't know why I should interest myself about so slight an acquaintance—but I both liked and admired all I saw of him.

I am going to write another letter describing the Twins <sup>2</sup> to Quintino Sella, whose name has been given to the twin which had been before ascended and over the top of which I went to reach the untouched twin. All these hunts after untrodden ground must seem folly to most—but to you I reply triumphantly by pointing to Wilfrid *avec son désert*.<sup>3</sup>

He sent a narrative of these two ascents to the

<sup>1</sup> Sidney Herbert, afterwards fourteenth Earl of Pembroke, married August 29th, 1877, Lady Beatrix Lambton, daughter of the second Earl of Durham. Lord Pembroke died March 30th, 1913.

<sup>2</sup> Les Jumeaux.

<sup>3</sup> Contemptuous reference of Julie, an old French servant, to



LADY ANNE BLUNT  
ÆTAT. 30—35



Alpine Club in London, who inserted it in their Journal, Vol. IX., p. 1.

His brother-in-law Wilfrid Blunt was a member of the Church of Rome, and a few years after her marriage his sister joined that community. There met in their house a small coterie of co-religionists, and among these Wentworth found for some years his only intimate society. Any one familiar with this circle at that time will know under whose influence he passed the hostile and unjust judgment on the English clergy given above. He himself was now much drawn to the great Latin Church. Her antiquity, her thousand beautiful legends, her universality as compared with the insularity of English Protestantism, all were intensely sympathetic to him. But her greatest attraction for him lay, perhaps unconsciously to himself, in her position here, as a small and closely knit society in an unsympathetic world. There is perhaps no better substitute for family ties and the solidarity of the clan than membership of a small, fighting, religious community. To meet constantly persons having the same aims, the same prejudices, the same loves, and—strongest bond of all—the same hates, is to lose all sense of loneliness. There was nothing to hold him back from entering the fold. His parents had never had him baptised, and he had never been taught to regard himself as a son of the Church of England. Yet strong as the temptation was to a man in his circum-

stances, he did hold back. He could not bring himself to make the necessary act of faith. In later years he acknowledged an additional and very characteristic difficulty, namely that the mere idea of confession was intolerable to him.

The following letters are addressed to two prominent members of the English Roman Catholic community :—

*To Mrs. William Froude.<sup>1</sup>*

BROOKS'S,

*February 1st, 1877.*

DEAR MRS. FROUDE,—

I just write a line to save the last post after finding your kind letter here.

I shall be very glad to go and see you from some day before Sunday, February 11th, till a day or two afterwards. If I thought it would be half as agreeable to you as to me I would gladly stay longer, but perhaps I may be prevented by . . .

I have often thought of your kindness to me ever since I knew you and am extremely glad to be told again of your unchanged friendship, though you are one of the few persons from whom no good action or kind words would surprise me. In future, though I

<sup>1</sup> Wife of William Froude, engineer and naval architect, and sister-in-law of James Anthony Froude and of Richard Hurrell Froude, the friend of Newman. Wentworth's friendship with Mr. W. Froude and his family dated from his Oxford days. Mrs. Froude was at this time an invalid, and she died two years later. She appears to have been a woman of rare distinction of mind and character, and Wentworth ever afterwards spoke of her with admiring affection, and with gratitude for the sympathy that she gave him. He never forgot some happy weeks that he

do not suppose that you would wish to be burthened with more correspondence, I will write to you sometimes, especially if I could find anything to say that would interest you, but I fear I should not succeed very well. Post time!

*To the same.*

Brooks's,  
*Saturday, March 3rd, 1877.*

I am very glad to hear any observations of yours about my character and manner—as I should hope to make them of some practical use. As for depression of spirits, I suppose these still exist, not in my mind, but in a certain stiffness and shyness of manner—of my never in all my life having felt the ground sure under my feet—I mean as to other people's sympathy and friendship. I suppose I am naturally discontented. I mean to try and take advantage of your remark so as not to be a depressing element in society. Depression of manner would not be true to my real feelings, least of all when I was staying with you, where all is so bright and happy.

I have indeed no cause for unhappiness except from those defects and peculiarities of character which hinder me a great deal in the human struggle for existence. I do not find myself well fitted either to know my own mind as to what I care about getting in life and how to set about it; and unfortunately, amusement and success do not come without labour. Though I have gained some experience, I am now too old to be able to use the greater part of it. Still I do not despair, and when I have a settled home, I

shall do my best to prepare a cheerful old age for myself. If I should live long enough my future appears to me in pretty bright colours, if not as gorgeous as that of a chosen few, still far better than that of the great majority of mankind. . . .

I am not now answering your letter, which I will do in a day or two, but thinking aloud on subjects suggested by it. I will in the meantime reflect on what you say, and even if a film over my eyes should prevent me from feeling quite as you do, I should rely so much on your wider experience as to try to follow any advice you may give, trusting to time for proof of its wisdom.

I have filled my letter too much with "I" and "my" and "me," and also expressed too plainly what is no doubt true, that I am mainly selfish and care very little for other people. But I *do* care for such friends as you and your family, of whom I have very few in the world, *almost* as much as for myself—and I wish I—Post time. . . .

*To the same.*

LONDON,

*Sunday, March 4th, 1877.*

Your kindness to me is based on one sentiment that must have greater durability than that friendship which only anticipates a brilliant career. Indeed, no friendship deserves the name until it attains stability through errors and voids and disasters, and I find the fatigue great of always wearing the mask of content and success as one must with most friends

and to show it, but as a reality—not an imposture. I do not think that you at all misunderstand what have been the real misfortunes of my life, but I will explain at the risk of saying what you know or divine already. I have been made a fool of several times in my life, but my heart has never been wounded, and never, I think, could be, by the bad acts of others. So far as they do me actual harm I would defend myself, and one's pride or vanity impels one to a revenge (if possible) at least equal to the injury, and till the uttermost farthing has been paid I do not think I could forgive or only by forgetting. But I feel no affliction, nor ever have, nor perhaps shall, at any baseness sufficiently great to destroy friendship, for all regard disappears the very instant conviction is complete. Even the memory of past affection vanishes so entirely that its existence ceases to be believed in. Even the hatred and craving for an eye for an eye is not (with me) derived from perverted friendship, but from a desire not to be fired at without having one's shot in return !

I feel that I am harder and more selfish than you can approve, but it would be still more mortifying if you supposed me soft enough to continue being humbugged when the fraud has once been made bare. I feel towards enemies implacable enough to understand eternal punishment or rather never again making friends with them, for I would not go on punishing after the crime has been well expiated. With some people there is a complex relationship—they do some injury and some good—then I feel much pain. The best course is, I should think, to keep out of their way without unkindness. This

class must do either the evil or the good unintentionally, and one is very apt to mistake which.

*Tuesday.* So far I had got when I got your letter this morning and one from Miss Froude,<sup>1</sup> which I will try and answer at once. . . . Not a word you have said is unvalued. It has all been a great pleasure to me to read and will help me much in settling future plans. I fully agree with you as to the great amount of good and hope for the future I have left to me in life, though I have wasted and lost so much of it. I have no cause of unhappiness or suffering at present, and the only thing that makes me at times depressed is that I feel "*declassé*." But "*tout peut encore se réparer*," and if I could live for ever I should feel no uneasiness as to the final result. I have some very kind friends who prevent the feeling of absolute solitude ; and perhaps it is really destined to be a good that if the latter part of my life is to be a success, it can only be by strenuous and persevering efforts. . . .

*To Mrs. J. H. Pollen.<sup>2</sup>*

PARIS,

*Sunday, December 2nd, 1877.*

I am still in Paris rather against my will, but have to wait for letters, etc. . . .

I pass on to tell you of an evening at the Opera with the Lagrenés on Friday. It was to see a new ballet—the *Fandango*. In the story of the ballet are two rival sets of dancers each with their own dancing

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Froude's daughter, now Baroness Anatole von Hügel.

<sup>2</sup> Wife of John Hungerford Pollen, architect. (See life pub-

master ; the gypsies, who represent the romantic school, dance some wild popular dances to the disgust of the rival dancing master of the classic school, who then shows them with his pupils in a minuet the proper way of dancing. The Lagrenés had a visit in their box from a Count "*n'importe*," who spends most of his life in the opera, and chiefly in the *coulisses*. He did not see the fun of a journey to Bagdad,<sup>1</sup> but is conscientiously persuaded that the grand interest of this life is in opera dancing—so he fulfils his mission by being the intimate friend of all *ces demoiselles*. He showed us those who had got on by merit—*i.e.* good dancing and well-shaped limbs—example La Beaugrand 1st dancer, then those who had had a success made for them because they have the style of beauty now in fashion—example la petite Mérante and la petite Roumier. Then there are those who have no merit and no beauty except in the opinion of some very influential person—for protection is more powerful than good works and all charming qualities. Then he told us which were "*enfants de la maison*" and which strangers, which he had had to scold for carelessness in their drill, and whether they had improved by his admonitions. No people are admitted behind the scenes but the *abonnés*—and some people pay as much as 20,000 fr. for a box, only for the purpose of frequenting the *coulisses*. But I must not exasperate you by talking of the angels of the ballet—they are all very well for a man who is fit for nothing else, and I think it is not strange people are found to prefer their society to the savages of the Euphrates, but I do

<sup>1</sup> The Blunts were going there.

not myself care about either the one or the other more than you do—with me they would have at most a success of curiosity.

On Thursday I went to the deputies', and I saw an orator of the Left shake his fist in the direction of an abbé, of whom he caught sight in the gallery near me, while he was speaking for the invalidation of Baron de Gosse's election. The *soutane* was his red rag, and he began thundering about the baneful influence of the clergy, whom he called reptiles, swindlers, villains, and exhausted his stocks of refined invective. The Right sometimes made an uproar, but the president Grévy called *them* to order and took *his* part. Grévy has a fine head and is dignified. Gambetta looks like a swine—he is a vulgar, coarse, heavy, irascible-looking man, and when he bellows an interruption of some speaker of the Right, his eye gleams like that of an enraged hog.

*To the same.*

58, RUE LAFAYETTE, PARIS,

*April 20th, 1878.*

It is certainly exasperating when people take the trouble of inventing mischievous falsehoods that cannot even have the excuse of being entertaining to narrator or listener. If I had not seen Lady Dorchester on Tuesday, 9th, I should suppose some one had wanted to make an April fool of her. I suppose I shall never know who compassed my death and with what object, but as I said to Lady Dorchester

to do so a little sooner than I otherwise might, in order that she may have the most direct evidence of my vitality.

I have however gained this much by the malicious fiction, that I have been able to see Mr. Pollen here, which I might not otherwise have done, and we have seen a play together and some charming pictures, had a ride, and talked a great deal about my house—besides going to the Lagrenés', where he got into a friendly but determined argument with Mme. de Lagrené about England and Russia. However, they were so pleased with him that they made him promise not to omit going to see them when he is next in Paris. Mlle. de L—— to-day spoke of the charm of his conversation. I must tell you an instance of modesty she told me of to-day: The Ctsse. de C—— was complimented by a friend, "*Vous avez tant d'esprit.*" "*Non! non! pas d'esprit—du génie peut-être.*" I will write to you again as soon and as often as I have anything interesting to say.

To-day I have put the best thing I have heard already into another letter—to Mme. Caccia—and I never repeat the same thing twice in writing, both on principle and from laziness—supposing my two correspondents met and confronted my two letters plagiarising from one another they would be both vexed and scornful, so I will not risk that.

Mme. Caccia is coming soon to Paris, and as I often write to her, my other correspondence can only gain from the cessation of that one while she is here. . . .

*To Mrs. William Froude.*

COURMAYEUR,  
*Wednesday, July 31st, 1878.*

I have now nearly finished a short tour in the mountains, and expect to be in England before the 10th. I am now waiting for fine weather to attempt the ascent of one of the few peaks in the Mont Blanc chain that remain unscaled. I have been here already six days for that purpose, but there have been continued westerly gales, which are quite as great a difficulty in climbing the higher peaks as for a sea voyage. There was still so much snow on the high mountains in the beginning of this month that I spent a fortnight in the southern Tyrol and Venetian Alps, which are more beautiful, though not so high, as the Swiss and Savoy Alps. On the way I visited the towns of Brescia and Bassano. At Brescia I made acquaintance with the works of a great painter of that place—Moretto, a contemporary of Tintoretto, I think. I also saw there the most beautiful bronze gilt statue I ever met with—a victory of the best Greek work and quite perfect ; it closely resembles the Venus of Milo—except that it is entirely draped—and was dug out fifty years ago in the very Roman temple where it now stands—the temple having been converted into a museum. The heat was very great ten days ago, which I like except when one is lodged in small close rooms. Out of doors there is no heat I do not enjoy. I shall spend the rest of the summer at Crabbet with my sister ; she is, I think, going to Arabia for the winter, and will perhaps start before October. I must add

but I cannot leave till I have tried my ascent—for next year it might be too late—as I hear there is a wretch who is coming here in a few days to make the same ascent. He does not know of my expedition and expects and means to be the first. When in England I will go and make you a short visit if you like and can see any people—for I hope to hear you are much better with the summer.

I have received the news a few days ago of the death of Mary's mother.<sup>1</sup> My solicitor has made sure that there is no doubt of the fact. I would never wish beforehand for the death of any individual, however beneficial the consequences might be supposed to be—that one must leave to Providence, but when such an event is a "*fait accompli*," one may be allowed to feel thankful for all the good that results. . . .

*To Mrs. J. H. Pollen.*

CRABBET,<sup>2</sup> THREE BRIDGES, SUSSEX,

*Wednesday, December 4th, 1878.*

I am going up to London to-morrow by the 2.14 train, as I do not care to be in time for the Queen's speech. I almost wish I were going to stay here, as it seems so uncertain whether I shall see you, and I am not really fond of all that parliamentary wrangling that is to take place. I shall not think it necessary to sit it all out, and do not intend to vote with either side. I should like to vote for the execution of both sets of place-men and place-hunters. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Fanny Heriot, Lady Wentworth. (See end of Chapter II.)

<sup>2</sup> Crabbet Park, belonging to his brother-in-law, Wilfrid Blunt; he was staying there in the absence of its owners.

I have not seen a newspaper since Monday and find it quite as amusing to be without, though Cobden said there was more to be learned from one newspaper than the whole literature of Rome and Greece.

*To the same.*

*Tuesday, December 10th, 1878.*

*Five o'clock.*

I saw Murray and told him there are forty-six copies<sup>1</sup> wanted for presentation. He said that would be rather a heavy handicap—and what they usually do is to supply the author gratis with twelve copies and any number over that at trade prices. The dedication is to be without the Persian characters.

*Eight o'clock.* (From the House of Lords.) I am writing in the middle of a speech by Lord Selborne, who is adroitly trying to trip up Cairns, who went before. I liked some of Cairns' speech, but one part, supposing that Afghanistan were in Scotland and also that England were smaller and saying how dangerous that would be, was neatly ridiculed by R. Palmer.<sup>2</sup> He also gave the direct negative to Cairns, who had appealed saying: "Is there one of your lordships who would not (if the thing were now to be done over again) grant all the Ameer asked of Lord Northbrook in guarantees against Russia?" Palmer replied, "I do not believe there is one of your lordships—not even the noble and learned lord himself—who would be mad enough to grant

<sup>1</sup> "Bedouin Tribes of the Euphrates," by Lady Anne Blunt, 1879.

<sup>2</sup> Earl of S...ll

him that guarantee against everything and everybody for which he asked." Selborne has just called the Government policy one of bullying and blundering and he makes it out very cleverly by making the missions advance without giving the Ameer a reasonable delay.

Lord Bath has spoken since, and made a violent and to me (who take only a spiteful pleasure in the debate) agreeable attack on Lord Salisbury for using language that would be called prevarication in private life. Now — is making a dull speech evidently learned by heart and for which he is constantly refreshing with notes. Lord Houghton in the middle of his speech impudently forced Lord Campbell, who had the misfortune to be near him, to go out and fetch him a glass of water—after five minutes he returned bringing a second glass for he had then already been supplied, so there he was speaking between two glasses of water on the seat behind him.

Our marquis<sup>1</sup> has just got up.

Now (half-past ten) it is long over and Lord — is making an odiously tiresome harangue which he has been bursting with for forty-eight hours—he tried once to begin before we sat down. Lord Ripon's speech was very sympathetic and he made a severe (nicely so) remark about Lord Beaconsfield's unscrupulous motive for the war—the rectification of the frontier. This nefarious scheme of spoliation he refused to believe his colleagues or any English gentleman could share.

<sup>1</sup> Marquis of Ripon. Mr. Pollen was his secretary and intimate friend.

The wretch is still speaking amidst cries of  
“Divide!” but I must stop.

*To the same.*

CRABBET, THREE BRIDGES, SUSSEX,

*Monday, December 16th, 1878.*

I have to devote an afternoon to letter writing so I will begin with you, as the easiest and most agreeable—then comes Anne, equally agreeable but longer—lastly —

I hope neither Grimalkin nor Grimalcone would give up my fiddles to any stranger who called and asked to have them delivered. Now all the skating is over and your sufferings soon I hope. . . .

Since I saw Lord Hartington's declaration on Friday night that his policy would be to recall Lord Lytton, I have been extra glad to have voted as I did, and not been tricked into joining in a manifestation against one who never did me any harm, and who once wrote very handsomely in vindication of my claim not to be disregarded about the Byron memorial. It seems to me so unfair and dishonest for the opposition to have concealed until *after* the vote in the Lords their vindictive spirit against poor Lytton. I can only suppose they know an honest declaration of that would cost them some votes—it certainly would mine if I had intended to vote with them for all other reasons. . . .

I have been fiddling a good deal as it has been too cold to enjoy most things. How inconceivably tiresome Mozart is, trivially difficult. I tried a sonata of his right through without a single mistake.

charming. What must the others be? I must begin my task.

*To the same.*

CRABBET,

*Thursday, January 16th, 1879.*

I have so much to say to you that I cannot collect together when I sit down to write. For I have passed much time in thinking, but when I try to remember and repeat all the thoughts I have desired you should possess yourself of, they seem to vanish away from distinct expression into words—like a vivid dream that is lost. I will certainly follow your direction as to prayer and do all I can to get into the habit again. But I know almost none. I have been trying to remember the only one I ever knew and am not sure I have it all and in the right order. But I felt as if that slight effort did me some good. I must try to tell you exactly in what ways the Catholic faith and visible Church attract and repel me. First it attracts me as being a living witness of the sovereignty of God and giving us with His authority promises that we shall sometime be reunited to those we have loved and shall lose by death. And doubts about those two convictions, so essential to my peace of mind, have ever been unspeakably odious to me, though I have been so little able to resist misgivings that all Christian and human hopes might be in vain. I cannot help being influenced by the unanimity with which the children of the revolution and the modern humanitarian philosopher are always roaring in my ears that there

is no God, and that they are His prophets. I distrust and dislike them as men and despise their arguments, but one is somehow depressed and frightened by their noise, numbers, recklessness and a kind of diabolical earnestness they seem to have. Then on the other hand I actually dislike the common run of priests—I do not remember meeting any I much liked. Besides having thought some of them tiresome, I think I naturally dislike all official and social superiors—people who tell you what to do or prevent you from doing what you like, not by virtue of the friendship you have for them and the obedience you voluntarily give them, but because they think themselves set over you in consequence of something entirely disconnected with your consent.

But at the present moment what has most influence over my sympathies and wishes, is that the Catholic religion is that of some particular human beings. And but for this feeling I should hardly feel drawn towards it, perhaps even the other way. I may say it is personified for me in certain people. This personification is both a necessity and a danger. Without it I could never begin to think seriously of religion at all, but I am not too much blinded by personal preoccupation to comprehend that no progress can be made in religion unless one can come to place God before everything else—before every human object of admiration, though I suppose it is permitted that meditations should contain a constant recollection of people we like and ought to like. There will be my great difficulty—to separate the religion from the personality, and I am very doubtful whether I shall ever get over it. But I will if I can.

I have already told you, perhaps many times, how irksome some of the details of practice of religion would be, and a general confession of all I have ever done I do not think I could make. I could endure it better for the future however tiresome it might be, for I do not *mean* to do anything wrong and shall unhesitatingly take every precaution beforehand to make opportunities impossible. I hope I should not act like the young man in "Adam Bede" who rides over to confess and consult the good parson. (*End of letter missing.*)

*To the same.*

*January 18th, 1879.*

I want to give you a summary of my religious impressions in youth. My grandmother told me I had never been baptised, as when I was born my father and mother were Unitarians, who, I believe do not use those words that are necessary for validity. My grandmother disapproved of what they did, or rather of what they did *not* do, though she did not herself consider any form of words essential. But she thought it was the worst way of attaching importance to words to omit the recognised forms intentionally. In 1853 when I was thirteen, I read Sismondi's "History of the Italian Republics," and was so impressed by the grandeur of the character and action of the Popes from Gregory VII. to Boniface VIII. that I was convinced of the truth of the Catholic religion, and determined to adhere to it as soon as I was my own master; and this state of mind actually lasted for five years, after which it faded away from sceptical influences and want of moral steadiness. I do not

mean that I did anything very wicked, from that I was saved both by want of opportunity and a fastidious repugnance to vulgar and coarse people and things. I was so much afraid of my grandmother that I never dared to tell her fully and frankly my convictions and intentions. She would, I am sure now, have been kind about it, but I was then afraid of the scorn with which she might reply. This cowardice of mine was without excuse, for she really did understand perfectly well my state of mind in religion and humoured me a good deal, for she had personally a very friendly feeling to Catholics and the bitterest contempt for No Popery. And she would not have called herself a Protestant, being above all a Christian and recognising no other name. When well enough she went to church, by preference to the Establishment, but also anywhere else to hear such men as James Martineau, Dr. Candlish and I believe Wiseman. On one occasion she asked me point blank : "Are you a Catholic ?" I could not confess the truth, and said "No." A fatal error ! If I had replied that I meant to be one and asked her permission to take that step, I should probably have remained one and avoided most of the folly and wrongdoing of my life. This was in 1855 or 1856. After denying what I believed to be the truth I gradually became more interested in other things than religion, forgot saying my prayers, of which indeed I had never learnt to say any but the Lord's prayer, thought of ever having to confess with shrinking, and my mind became ripe for taking an impression adverse to religion, as soon as one might be presented to me. And in 1858 I read a book that

shook to ruins my religious faith : Milman's "History of Latin Christianity." The polished sarcasm with which he picks out by preference, and gloats over all that can be turned into ridicule in the history of the Church, destroyed my reverence for that I had before so much admired. I have now said a great deal too much and more than I intended. Fortunately you glance over things very fast. I should like to send you an extract from the last *Revue* about Bach's music, but must keep it for another day as you have in this letter perhaps more than you will read.

*To the same.*

LONDON,

*Wednesday night or Thursday  
morning, half-past 12,*

*February 13th, 1879.*

I have come back from the dinner which I found pleasant. Mrs. Ritchie<sup>1</sup> was very amiable and asked about my house, which I answered her by telling about the architect and you, and that I had seen you both lately and told you I was hoping to meet her and that you had said you were soon coming to Pembridge for six weeks and hoped to see her. She spoke with the proper enthusiasm about you and him—he is so handsome and you so beautiful—and other nice things. She looked radiant. Of course she is not grown any prettier, though I have no doubt she is nicer to look at from being so smiling and kind in manner, than most people of her age. She lives now in or close to Kensington Square—27, Young

<sup>1</sup> Daughter of W. M. Thackeray.

Street, and I am to go and see her on Wednesday. She talked about her dead sister with great affection, and said with much kindness that she was pleased to see me again as her sister had liked me.

*Thursday, midday.* I have seen the architect, who has been here and is gone to his Orestes at the Marquisate. We meet again at Chelsea and then go together to the H. of Lords and dine there.

## CHAPTER IV

### ALPINE LETTERS

THE event announced in the letter to Mrs. Froude of July 31st, 1878,<sup>1</sup> was a momentous one for Wentworth. He found himself unexpectedly a free man, and he could once more hope to find a home and to make for himself a settled life in his own country. His new house at Chelsea was now progressing fast under Mr. Pollen's auspices, and he naturally thought of giving it a mistress. In the autumn of 1879 there occurred an episode—so well known at the time that I cannot omit it here—which was a painful recollection to him all his life long. He met in a Tyrolean mountain inn an American lady, well known and distinguished as a writer, and after a very few days' acquaintance they became engaged. About a month later he broke off the engagement. For the rashness of the initial act, and for the change of feeling that forced him to reverse it, he would have been ready to take the fullest blame. Much must be forgiven to a man, who, having already had experience of a disastrous marriage, could not bring himself to build his life anew upon what—rightly or wrongly—seemed to him an insecure foundation.

It was some months after this—early in 1880—that he chanced to meet my mother in the house of

their mutual friend, Dr. Ross. She had always been known to him as a distant cousin,<sup>1</sup> and he was now glad to renew the old ties with her and with us all. We were a large family, and our beloved father,<sup>2</sup> so brave and serene under the burden of helplessness and pain, was the centre of a gay and happy crowd of young people. It must have been an attractive atmosphere to a man who had so few intimacies and who had long suffered from being almost entirely shut out from family life. It was in June, 1880, that he first asked me to be his wife. But I had my own reasons then for hesitating about marriage, and it was not till November 15th that we became engaged. During the intervening months there came to me a delightful series of letters, beginning "Dear Miss Stuart Wortley," and ending "Yours very sincerely," from which I give the following extracts:—

CHelsea,

*Tuesday, August 3rd, 1880.*

I cannot leave till to-morrow or later if the debate goes on.<sup>3</sup> I am so vexed at being detained that I feel ready to vote for the execution of the authors of the bill as well as the destruction of their work. Last

<sup>1</sup> She and William, Earl of Lovelace, were both descended from George Grenville, King George III.'s Prime Minister; their sister grandmothers being Catherine Grenville, wife of Richard, Lord Braybrooke, and Hester Grenville, wife of Hugh, first Earl Fortescue, members of the generation that their contemporaries called "The Mighty Seven."

<sup>2</sup> James Stuart Wortley, son of James, first Lord Wharncliffe, and his wife, Lady Caroline Crichton, M.P. for Island of Bute, Recorder of London and Solicitor-General. Born 1805, died 1881.

night the only great statesmanlike speech was Lord Lansdowne's—I did not know he could be so powerful. He gave it to his former colleagues well about their garbled quotations from the *Code Napoleon*, and forcing a landlord to buy at a fancy price a tenant right worth *nil* in the market. Lord Derby at first pretended to befriend the Ministers, at which they looked relieved, applauded him gratefully and listened to him with eager hope. But having lured them to a false security he sprung on them like a Thug, strangled them as it were with their own responsibility for an unjust unstatesmanlike bill, which, however amended by cutting down to a quarter of its dimensions as to time, space and money, could not work. The county court judges must either decide unjustly against the landlords, or be unpopular and insulted or worse. Were the judges to believe a tenant's own statement that he could not pay? If so every decision would be in the tenant's favour. It would have been better if the bill had never been heard of. (*Loud Tory applause.*) Lord Derby : “I had no doubt that sentiment would be popular in this house.” (*Laughter* in which Lord D. himself joined, or at least twisted his face to a grin.) But as the bill was there—entirely at the peril and responsibility of Ministers—and could not now be unmade, he should vote for it always on condition of transforming it to an infinitesimal part of itself in committee, “*if it ever gets there.*”

I suppose his idea was to give them rope to hang themselves with, for he could not have spoken more bitterly of them if they deserved impeachment (which indeed *I* think they do).

While listening to this speech *in support* of them, the Ministers' faces looked quite contorted with pain —only Lord Northbrook had a grim smile as if he were not much affected by the sufferings of Granville, Kimberley and Argyll.

Then Salisbury spoke, saying the Government were trying to appease the wild beast (whom they do not seem inclined to tame) by giving him their hand to devour, hoping he may be satisfied with that and spare the rest of their body. But they never would get rid of him till they had given him everything they had to give. . . .

HOCHKRUMBACH (VORARLBERG),  
*Sunday evening, August 8th, 1880.*

I am writing in a room full of dancing peasants which might seem a bore if one yielded to first impulses, but when I think what you would feel about it, I feel sure you would make the best of it and like them to amuse themselves in a harmless way. Now they have gone, but the time is not as short as it looks on paper as in the meantime I have had my supper of bread and milk. . . . I passed Schrecken on the way, but would not stop there as I had heard of this place as being much higher up in the mountain—it is about 5,600 feet above the sea at the foot of some steep peaks. There are no trees, but the meadows cover the mountain sides high up and are of a brilliant green never seen away from the hills except on some old china. I found a nice little inn with friendly people. The only visitors are two affable priests waiting for a fair day to cross the mountains. I think they won't be ill if

They were asked to say Mass in the church here which has no incumbent.

It has not rained much to-day, and I took a walk from half-past one till six—going to the top of the Widdenstein—a precipitous peak 8,400 feet high. At first I lost my way going to the wrong side of the mountain—but when I was within 700 feet of the summit I was stopped by a precipice impassable by me. I had to descend 1,000 feet and go round the base to the other side of the Widdenstein, where I found a path which took me up through a cleft in the crags to the top, where I saw little but masses of cloud—only glimpses of green valleys in the sunshine. You would have smiled to see how miserably timid and awkward I was in any approach to a steep place—you would not have thought it necessary to preach prudence, but activity. But I shall be better in a day or two. It was coming down that I was over-cautious—going up I was all right for there was no possibility of slipping. I picked a few flowers to send you and I found *one* of these yellow flowers picked ; it was under a stone in a most desolate place where I should have thought no one ever passed. I hope there is no spell in it that brings disaster, or if there is that I may absorb it all and it may do you no harm. I enjoyed the solitude of my mountain walk so much. I met no one, but felt nearer to those I really like—you know there are not (many ?).

IMST,

*Wednesday, August 11th, 1880.*

• • • • •  
Your charming and interesting letter made me very happy this morning. I am so glad you thought

what I wrote worth reading to your father and that it entertained him. It always seems to me that those leading orators in the Lords have a double nature—half serious men, and very much more than half comedians—and the audience, not excepting me, is much keener about the brilliancy of the acting and dexterity of manner than about the matter. Whenever a hard personal hit is made, both friends and enemies instantly turn their eyes in the most unblushing way on the victim, to see the expression of his countenance.

I am so glad to think of you in the delightful place you describe, seeing the last of every good sunset, and all the visible traces of the labour of man, agreeable ones like the embankment. The mountaineer will keep the letter and spirit of his promise and hopes never to do anything displeasing to the kind friend who advises him and whose *jusiticia* he will continue to be as long as she will allow it. . . .

I should think not only are you right about not dissecting *those* feelings, but that all self-examinations do more harm than good. My grandmother said, *Be thyself* would be a better maxim than *Know thyself*. But there are feelings the expression of which to some other person—if the person exists to whom a confidence can be made—is in itself a relief from them. . . .

*Next morning.*

Tuesday, August 10th, I started at four and came here. The son of the house carried my things for me and shewed me the way over the Tenne pass, at the top of which he shewed me the place where five men were destroyed by an avalanche. This was commemorated by a cross with a rude picture and inscription. . . .

The picture is impressive in its roughness, through the earnest piety with which the five men are depicted on their knees gazing with solemn joy and gratitude on the heavenly apparition above them of the Blessed Virgin and Child. Violent and sudden death is thus represented as a peculiar favour and grace. I was much impressed by it. Schrecken, which I had passed three days before, is a pretty tiny village surrounded by pine trees and hay-fields as well as steep avalanche slopes. I saw it during an outburst of the sun on a rainy day and it did not look a dangerous spot. To return to the day before yesterday—the weather was menacing and gloomy and there was one violent storm. In the descent we went into a chalet to get some milk. This may have been about 8 o'clock. The cows were going to be let out of their yard, which was very spacious—a stream running through the middle—inches deep in mud from the wet weather and the treading of the animals—the whole walled in by a barrier of pine branches. Every cow had its number suspended from its collar. As soon as the gate was opened (when the milking was over) the cows descended the steep valley very fast to get into the forest, where they are sheltered from the wind and rain. When it is fine they go uphill. Then I went into the hut to get some milk and found myself in a large room with an open timber roof. On one of the beams was a large figure of the Saviour on the cross. At one end was a huge copper caldron walled into a sort of kiln and heated from a cavity below reached by going down some steps. At the other end the water of the stream was brought in for making the butter. I was received by three very

worthy men who are employed by the commune of Imst for the wages of thirty-five florins each for the summer of sixteen weeks, but they have their food also. And it is not so hard a life as that of the herdsmen of the other cattle, that give no milk, who have to be always out of doors with their beasts on the high mountains in all weathers. Strange to say they are never ill. It seems to suit them. My three hosts examined my map with great interest. I have described the chalet and cowyard perhaps too long for those who have not *seen* it. I think you would have thought it a pretty picture. I reached Imst at 10 o'clock.

MITTELBERG,

*Friday, August 13th, 1880.*

This morning, about seven, I left Imst with a man to carry my things, and have been here about half an hour (it is now six). This place is at the extreme upper end of the Pitz Thal, and I passed by both St. Leonhard and Plangeros. For the first three hours the weather was entirely cloudy with a fresh and fragrant west wind blowing ; it was pleasant enough passing through cornfields, grass and groves. In one thriving village I saw this inscription over a barn-door :—

“ Tadle du nicht mich und das meine  
Tadle zuvor dich und das deine  
Und wenn nicht findest zu tadeln an dir  
Als dann kannst kommen und tadeln an mir.”<sup>1</sup>

RENOVATUM EST

1 7 9 5.”

<sup>1</sup> “ Blame thou not me and mine ;  
Blame rather thyself and thine.  
If thou canst find no blame in these

Then the valley became narrow, and the scene was all the wilder and sterner that it began to rain and the clouds darkened the daylight—now it is frightful, and I want to-morrow to cross the mountains (glaciers, I believe) to Fend—but I shall be prudent, and if guides do not recommend going I shall wait or find a safe way. . . .

SÖLDEN,

*Sunday, August 15th, Day of  
the Assumption.*

As I was starting on my walk between nine and ten, I was caught in the biggest procession I ever saw—more than 500 people with three banners and five images; the men in front; in the centre the priests under a canopy; behind the women, some of whom were laughing and gossiping; but others, especially the older ones, praying earnestly almost with a look of pain. They made a circuit of a mile in the fields before returning to the church, and stopped about four times to sing and scatter incense. Meanwhile the bells were ringing and guns firing. To escape from them I jumped over a stream, and found myself in a quicksand where I floundered for some steps before getting to firm ground.

FEND OR VENT,

*Monday, August 16th.*

This morning I was awakened by a cock. Whenever I hear one I think of a novel of Cherbuliez, "Meta Holdenis," where a dying father says to his son: "The only music I ever loved is the crowing of a cock, and whenever you hear it think of me and what it meant to me: *la vie est un combat.*" In the story the *chant du coq* occurs very opportunely.

. . . I hope I need no such antidote as this against any serious crisis, and on this occasion all it meant was that it was time to get up. I found such a lovely morning. I went into the churchyard and looked at the children's graves, all in a group, which I had not before seen. The subject was differently treated in the paintings on the *plaques* in the centre of the crosses. In some an angel was flying upwards with the child in its arms. In others the child was in a boat on an extensive tranquil sheet of water. Far in the background are the child's native mountains, and an angel is rowing the boat rapidly towards a sunny and flowery shore. In others the angel is guiding the child in a pleasure ground ; it can just walk with the angel's support, and is stretching both hands forward with infantile delight. There are others where the angel is in charge of a whole group of innocent children. In another part of the *Friedhof*, in a small oratory, is a heap of skulls—I think thirty—that is under a carving of the Crucifixion with the two sorrowing Maries. I much wished you had been there to see the children's graves. . . .

VENT,  
*Wednesday, August 18th.*

. . . I walked up yesterday to that hovel where a kind of inn is kept—the place is called (I think) *die hohe spitze*. After sleeping miserably in a bed 5 feet long, I found the weather had become so stormy that I gave up the ascent and returned here. In the afternoon the sun came out, and I took a scrambling walk by some goat tracks, to escape from the swarm of

. . . But when I get on to the mountain without rain I do not think of the wretchedness of the quarters. I see some flowers or ferns, or a pine tree clinging to the side of a crag like a creeper, or a woodpecker working away at a fir cone until he gets it off and flies to his home with it, or the soft glow of the evening sun on the trees, or the gradual change of colour from oxydised silver to blood red as the last rays of the vanished sun fall on a mountain mass of rock. . . .

## SÖLDEN,

*Sunday, August 22nd, 1880.*

I have only just been to the post office and got your letter. In my young days, I used sometimes, when on a visit to my father, to ride to Newlands Corner, Hackhurst Down, St. Martha, Albury,<sup>1</sup> and the sand hills to the south overlooking the woodland plain of Sussex—I thought all that country most beautiful, and should still, I think. Wherever in these mountains I come to a heathy ground it takes me back to scenes I have loved in my childish days. The Alps have a stern and potent fascination—a mixture of terror and unearthly brightness, which, together with the severe and healthy exertion of climbing, would soothe and occupy the most restless and wearied spirit. But I cannot imagine any one hesitating for a moment to prefer the life of an English home in the lovely scenery you enjoy so much to the life I lead here in rough quarters indoors, and out of doors wandering partly at hazard for the best part of the day. I am however contented with what I can have, without regretting that I am

<sup>1</sup> We were spending the summer in a house on Albury Heath, Surrey.

deprived of all you have. In fact, just now I am better here. I am getting young and strong in this savage existence—my mind also, I hope, may be invigorated. . . .

Now I must return to Friday, 20th, and tell you what I did. I got up at one after a sleep in a room with three other beds, every one occupied. At a quarter to two I started with two guides for the ascent of the Hohe Wilde, which is only 11,300 feet high, but a harder climb than the others. For two and a half hours we went by moonlight sometimes obscured by dark clouds. By daylight we trod on an extensive glacier, on which it took us more than two hours, sometimes of a very steep ascent, to reach the extreme upper end at the foot of the highest peak, which was a giddy climb of three-quarters of an hour—remarkably steep snow slopes and rocks. . . . On reaching the top at 7.35, we just got into an enormous black cloud, which was sweeping over the peak and out of which it was snowing. In a few minutes this cloud was gone—bright sunshine followed, and I found myself in the midst of what I would call a boundless fleet of every sort and colour of cloud drifting fast with the wind. In the intervals between the clouds were mountains at a great distance, valleys half veiled in a sky-blue haze under fleecy white cloudlets—at my feet one of the largest Alpine glaciers : the great Oetzthaler Ferner.

NEUSTIFT,

*Tuesday, August 24th.*

• • • •  
Yesterday about five I left Sölden in dim weather and came here over the Bildstädler Pass in a

long day of nearly thirteen hours. It is so called, I suppose, from an image carved in relief of the Virgin with the dead Christ on her knees and stuck on a pole on some rocks at the top of the pass between two glaciers, and a little lake with floating icebergs, now frozen into the ice that has covered it for the last three weeks' bad weather.

I went with a large party of return guides—the one who was roped on to me showed me with glee several places on the glaciers we crossed where people had fallen into crevasses and never been seen again—he explained they had no guides and, I believe, thought it served them right. Leaving the glacier, after a long steep descent I came to such a lovely valley, green with huckleberries, fern, elder, birch and firs. An impetuous foaming torrent roared with ever changing sound. Two fine waterfalls fell into it—one of prodigious height and volume had gnawed everything away from the rock for a great breadth. I have not quite made up my mind how much I like waterfalls. Do you? I rather want to take my opinion from you. Once I did not care about them, but I think I am coming round when there is much mass of water and some mystery.

. . . This morning after breakfast I walked to the top of the Burgstall—more than 5,000 feet above this village. From the top I had a beautiful glimpse of the great valley of the Inn and town of Hall. I met a flock of seven sheep who seemed pleased to see me. They rushed up to me snorting and began to lick my hands and nibble my clothes most affectionately. They have bright eyes like wild animals and have a fearless independent look about them. I

got back down to the Inn after six hours' absence, but not before it began to rain heavily, which I had expected, for the flies had been maddening with their attentions when I started. . . .

STEINACH,

*Thursday, August 26th.*

I arrived here at 3.30, and at once found your letter, with fern and heather from *your* common, which made your letter still more pretty and welcome for that bit of the nature that is about you. To return to yesterday—I found my guide was waiting for me while I was waiting for him; so I left off writing and said good-bye to Neustift and walked up a wild glen called the Piniser Thal, shut close in by mountain sides clothed with dwarf fir (about the size and colour of furze), topped with limestone walls and steeples thousands of feet in height. I think they must be dolomite from the vertical fissures and variegated colour—yellow, black and white. In the gloomiest part the valley opened out a very little for a short distance only—enclosing a beautiful level grass plain like a large cricket ground. In the middle stood a stately house called “Auf der Isse,” now uninhabited and occupied for the summer months by cowherds. I asked my guide why this was, but he could only reply, “*Es ist so! das thal wird immer wilder—bald hat man keine sommer mehr.*” Perhaps there is some heredity curse. The glen is the more melancholy from a dried-up river bed like those of Italy and Africa. Here and there water comes out of the stones and runs for a short distance to disappear again in the bed. Before getting to my night

quarters, of course, I got the inevitable shower of rain, but that I am now used to. Before me, at the head of the glen, was the Habicht,<sup>1</sup> a dark pyramid of grassy precipices capped with snow. At the foot is the Kar alp—and there in the cowherds' house I passed the night. Besides three Italian masons building a new stable, there were five of them—three old men, one middle-aged and a boy, who supped out of one huge bowl of porridge, each dipping his spoon into the part reserved to him by an imaginary line. Here the cows were stabled for the night—unlike what I described near Imst.

. . . This morning at half-past four we started for the ascent of the Hawk. When about halfway up we found footprints, which my guide Pfurtscheller declared were of that morning and of several persons, and from their not always following the right path, he discovered, with the perspicacity of hate, that they had no guide. Lastly, three-quarters of an hour from the summit we came upon the enemy, who had started long before us from the alp of Gschnitz on the other side; and when they reached the snow near the top dared not to venture on it, and being unwilling to give up, were sitting rather uncomfortably in the rain—for it had begun to drizzle. I forgot to say that the sunrise was gorgeous as a fiery illumination—only, after lighting the Hawk crimson, the sun was drowned by impenetrable banks of inky clouds. We passed the enemy, rapidly crossed the small glacier and stood on the summit at eight. Then they picked up courage to follow us. They *had* no guide and consisted of four persons—one a dowdy and untidy

<sup>1</sup> Hawk.

woman. They tried to question my guide about getting down on the other side, but he only told them: "*Das rathe ich Ihnen nicht ohne führer—es ist verflucht steil.*"<sup>1</sup> Soon after we trod the snowy summit, it began to snow very thick, but without wind—it looked like a real snow-storm in a ballet in the *Voyage à la Lune*, called "*Les Flocons de Neige*." But instead of the *ballerine* more or less draped in pink or blue, there was the sylphide of Hall and her three companions. It was very pretty to see black mountains through a cloud of countless millions of dropping flakes. And a long way off through this same veil I saw the town of Steinach in the sunshine.

We left the four "vagabonds" (as I suppose Pfurtscheller meant when he said they were *schleifer*) at the top, and went down the way we had come as far as the Piniser Joch, where we separated, he to return to Neustift, I to go down a steep and long declivity to Gschnitz.

HINTERDUX,

*Monday, August 30th.*

Before going to bed I must write the history of another day. This morning when I asked for the man to carry my things I was shown a drunken-looking asthmatic old man. After some hesitation, however, I engaged him and left Steinach. On the way I saw a curious sign to an inn, "Zum Wolf," and there was a model of a wolf with a lamb in its mouth. After passing St. Jodoc I found my old wretch was going very slow and breathing hard, and at Schmirn, where I stopped to have lunch, he pro-

<sup>1</sup> "I advise you not to try it without a guide. It is cursed steep."

posed that I should take on instead of him a younger and strong man he had found. I agreed. At first the old creature wanted to be paid three florins (having only come two hours), his substitute receiving only two florins for relieving him of the remaining five and most difficult hours, but the new man cried out against this, and finally I paid off the old boy with two and a half florins, the other two and a half florins coming to the one who did more than two-thirds of his work for him. At twelve we left the old reprobate at the inn at Schmirn, my new man assuring me he would never stir thence till he had spent all the money he got on *schnapps*. The porter No. 2 turned out very well—was cheerful and active. I stopped at Kasern, an elevated hamlet nestled among precipitous grass-grown mountains every bit of which is mown for hay every third year. . . .

## GINZLING,

*Tuesday, August 31st.*

I got up at half-past four and saw a blazing dawn. By a quarter-past five I got off and went down the Dux valley with the Frozen Wall behind brightening this charming valley for a long way down. I was constantly turning round to look at its abrupt ice fall and spotless upper snow. The hamlet of Hinterdux, though separated from it by the laborious mountain pass I came over yesterday, belongs to the commune of Schmirn—and till a few years ago every corpse had to be carried there five weary hours, difficult and dangerous in winter to be buried, the men of toil often falling up to their necks in snow during the long ascent. Before I came across the frontier of Steinach and the Zillerthal I passed a mighty venerable fir on

to which an imposing crucifix and holy group are fastened, and half-a-dozen pictures of those who have perished on that spot by the fall of trees or avalanches, for it is much swept by them in winter. One picture represents two men crushed under an avalanche—above in the sky is the holy sign. They were hunting chamois in the heights above (Death having, I suppose, disguised himself as their game to allure them to a frightful end), when they and the chamois were all swept down a vast distance to the spot where they were found. My informant added sometimes men live for days buried under the snow of the avalanche, and when dug out have been found to have eaten the fingers off their hands for hunger. This last I doubt.

I only went as far as a sharp promontory 3,600 feet above Ginzling overlooking the valley from Mayrhofen to its head. To the south I saw a stony peak which attracted me, and I find it is the Löffler, so I am going to ascend it to-morrow if fine, *with guides*.

*Thursday, September 2nd.*

The ascent has failed—a thing I have always particularly disliked. The sight of a peak one has been unable to conquer is painful; but now that I can write to you, no ordinary disappointment can weigh on my mind. I had rather all the Alps perished than be deprived of telling you all I do. . . .

## CHAPTER V

### ALPINE LETTERS (*continued*)

BRÜCK,

*Monday, September 6th, 1880.*

I am so glad that you can endure reading my letters—most people would only see their defects, but you see that I do my best to make clear to you the chief impressions my journey makes upon me. I could not write all I do to you to any one else, for with you I feel secure from ridicule. As you think I am more likely to violate truth by understating Alpine dangers, I will try to be on my guard, both in avoiding the reality and in making a clean breast of it to you, if there were cause. I do not think I have been in real or imaginary danger so much as twelve times in my life—the last time more than three years ago, ascending some snow on the Grand Paradis which the guide said was dangerously likely to break into an avalanche. Once four years ago I *think* I was in considerable peril coming down the Brèche de la Meidje. I thought I would slide down some steep snow. Being tired and unwell, I lost my footing and shot forwards towards the crags below, when happily I got my ice pickaxe stuck into the snow and stopped myself. Since then I have never tried a critical glissade.

The present Government is a hardening process for the country, but I am afraid they are more likely to kill than to cure. . . .

. . . If the fatigue of the summer and autumn session were to send the whole crew to their last account I should not mourn, but I suppose there are plenty more to take their places. After all, I care little for politics, as I have long made up my mind the human race are not preparing a happy future for themselves, and I do not think the *maladie du siècle* or *zeitgeist* is confined to one class or party. They all seem to me to want to get as much enjoyment as they can out of life without earning or deserving it. Quite a mistake, of course, to suppose that possible, but a mistake that has led to much destruction and wrong, and will lead to worse than we have yet seen. I wish a change might come over the spirit of mankind that would falsify my anticipation. . . .

*Thursday, September 9th.*

. . . . . I think I have come to like waterfalls very well now because all running water is so agreeable. But a great waterfall seems to me like the death of the stream the continuity of which is interrupted; and when the scattered spray is gathered together again into another channel I can hardly think of it as the same torrent. As a human existence free from violent adventures seems to me more beautiful than a series of shocks, errors, passions and catastrophes, so I prefer a happy-looking stream, always active, never dangerous. What does one so much good in nature is not the exceptional but the familiar. One constantly finds new interests and beauties in the

commonest productions. Perhaps the reason I love the Alps so well is that there is nothing strange or exceptional in them to me. Most of what I see I have seen a thousand times before. I know the plants, animals, earth, stones, and glaciers better than those of England. Nature is the fairy story and we the children that like it better every time it is repeated. I daresay I should like English country life as well when I knew it in the freedom of a home of my own. But certainly this country has the advantage of less cultivation—nature seems more wealthy. Talking of streams, I remember a pretty little stream at Albury—a rare thing in the south of England. But now perhaps it has dried up from drainage. . . .

As I write I see three pigs trespassing in a field, and a dog enjoying a little too much his occupation of driving them out. The pigs are shrieking piteously, and the big bully is the most frightened of the three, not for a moment showing his teeth as he does to his little kinsmen. He is running so fast that the latter only are exposed to the teeth of the dog. . . .

## FORLEITEN,

*Sunday, September 12th, 1880.*

September 14th.—The return of beautiful weather somehow reminds me of all I like, and it comes more naturally to think of you in connection with all the curious and charming things I wander among—I think how you would like this or be interested by that. On the other hand, when all is darkened by dense rain I can only think of you to

be glad you are not in such a deluge, and to fear that what I write to you will be infected with the dulness of all I have round me. The natives do not seem depressed by bad weather. I heard yesterday constant peals of laughter from the peasants assembled in one of the rooms of the inn. Their joviality was interrupted by a fight between two big dogs under the table which was more for show than *à outrance*. It was as if each one meant to say : "Let some one seize hold of me, or I shall kill the other dog." But no one seemed inclined to go within reach of their teeth. However, the enraged creatures let themselves be knocked asunder very easily with the end of a bench. . . .

### HEILIGEN BLUT,

*September 16th.*

I sent you the heartsease for its name as much as because I liked it. All flowers may represent to us the *heartsease* one craves for after contemplating the miseries of the civil war always continuing among the human race—that conflict for life in which all of us have been wounded. Just as flowers brighten the conflict with nature that is so arduous and so violent in these mountains, so I suppose kindness cheers and distracts from the perils and sufferings of the heart and mind. If the world is a riddle, it is one with a heavy penalty—sometimes death—inflicted on those who guess wrong. I am not at all sure I can solve it so far as concerns me. I am inclined to think all those of us who have the certainty of bread to eat, clothes to wear, freedom to choose our own occupations, and health, fortunate whatever their mental sufferings, because I imagine all grief to be curable

however acute, while the ordinary sufferings of poverty and illness are incurable. But while it lasts the pain of the mind is worse than everything else. . . . May the heartsease be yours in every sense !

. . . Would you believe it—or rather the thing passes belief—that the inhabitants of that steep mountain slope have in addition to their hardships and dangers begun a lawsuit against the prince ? They complain that his chamois eat their corn. This may be so, and if they had gone amicably to him and stated their grievance, he would have granted them fair compensation ; but instead they have fallen into the hands of a lawyer and at his instigation made exaggerated claims which the prince resists. All the rest of their severe life would seem to me endurable enough ; but to plunge into the intrigues of cities in addition to the natural difficulties of their lot looks like infatuation.

I was only once in Lady Georgiana Fullerton's<sup>1</sup> company, and do not much remember her appearance, only that I liked her conversation, which reminded me a little of Lady Theresa Lewis—Lady G. F.'s and Lord Granville's grandmother, the celebrated Duchess of Devonshire, was much more beautiful than one would expect *his* ancestress to be. Did not Talleyrand say to a man who boasted of his mother's beauty : “ *C'était donc monsieur votre père qui n'était pas si bien* ” ?—a similar figure of insult to the reply made by a man to the owner of an extensive park and grounds who was showing his friend all the improvements he had made. “ I planted this. I made that

<sup>1</sup> Author of “ Ellen Middleton,” etc.

pond. I raised that mound," etc. The friend, who was, I suppose, rather bored at not being let off an inch of it, exclaimed : " What a —— ugly place it must have been before ! "

I am rather unhappy at the thought of the tramps who infest your neighbourhood. I hope you do not go out by yourself. . . .

STÜDHUTTE,  
1,500 metres above Kals,

*Sunday, September 19th.*

After dinner, though many of those ragged clouds so characteristic of a west wind had been driven Heaven knows whence, to blot the sky before so serene, I decided to come up here and take my chance for the ascent of the Gross Glockner to-morrow. I started at half-past two and had to retrace my steps of yesterday as far as the toy church, and more ; then through a green valley enclosed by heights crowned with forbidding faces of rock. Much of the rock which I passed is olive green—I think it is called chlorite—in texture it is as a slaty granite. Between 8,000 and 9,000 feet I left the last grass for débris of chlorite which guides into soft, firm green earth, nice to tread. But the path was at the last marred by the fresh snow, cold and damp, some of which I could not escape though I made a round, and was as unwilling as a cat to get my feet wet, having no change. However, I am now warming myself at a small fire, and my boots are hanging above. Since I began to write I have eaten a capital soup my guides cooked out of butter, a little flour, bread, water and salt. They are now smoking and talking about their professional work.

Outside I am sorry to say there is thick mist. No sooner had I started than the clouds—not at all to my surprise—multiplied and thickened and blackened. It was as if Renan's "*puissance rusée qui nous exploite*" had a crafty satisfaction in spoiling my expedition as soon as I was committed to it. In vain had I taken an umbrella with me in propitiation of any such malignant influence. The blue sky became scanty and disappeared under the devouring grey. Before the fire was lit in the hovel here, it was so cold that one's breath made dense clouds. Now it only makes light clouds. The hovel is well built and supplied with cooking things and warm wraps. It is named after its founder—one Stüdl, who built it at his own cost to help tourists in this ascent. One of my guides (when he does not speak) looks as distinguished as a diplomatist or official of the old school, but when he opens his mouth with patois it spoils the illusion. Good night.

WINDISCH MATREI,  
*Wednesday, September 22nd.*

On Monday, September 20th, on looking out of doors at three in the morning I found it had snowed all night and was still snowing; so I returned to sleep till daylight, if I may so call the painful dazzling of the new snow which glared out of all the covering dimness. But I waited till nearly ten reading Lucretius, who consoles his reader for all the ills of existence by saying death is the term of them all. As long as men were a prey to the terror of the gods and of Tartarus they were driven to commit great crimes to obtain their favour;<sup>1</sup> but an illustrious Greek

<sup>1</sup> As Agamemnon to sacrifice his daughter.

(meaning I suppose Epicurus) had discovered the ultimate secret of the universe; viz., that nothing could be created out of nothing, and that nature flourished without the gods, who are not what a fond people once were told. Have we not heard something like this in our time? only not adorned by the poetical talent of the great Roman.

. . . At last I gave up all hope of the weather and turned away from the Gross Glockner and returned to Kals. . . .

I am glad that you understand the influence Doudan has had on me. One thing I like about him is that he is not specially French, though he certainly writes his language so beautifully—but I feel the charm is still more in the individual and the thoughts than the grammar. His style would have been equally good in English or German—though, of course, once written in French, a great deal is untranslatable—it would have been differently turned in a different idiom.

. . . They would be wretches if they were not charmed with your sister<sup>1</sup> and did not think themselves fortunate to win such a relation—but, though they are only doing their bounden duty, there is much merit in that in a world where so often the clearest obligations are neglected. The highest affections are implied by the word duty rightly understood—as Cordelia felt to her father. Doudan I think says a thanksgiving to the effect: “*Permettez-moi de vous dire que vous ne faites que votre devoir*” would sound meagre—and yet is it not

<sup>1</sup> Caroline, engaged to Norman Grosvenor, son of Lord and Lady Ebury.

sometimes more difficult to do a strict duty that everyone expects from you—and of course feels no gratitude for—than to astonish them with unexpected magnanimity which brings them to their knees. . . .

LIENZ,

*Friday, September 24th, 1880.*

• • • •  
Yesterday I only left Windisch Matrei at half-past twelve. . . . It is a peculiarity of the enjoyment of mountain scenery that one soon wishes to get rid of the particular mountain barrier that one has before one.

The post carriage was a common open carriage with a canopy on iron supports. As far as Huben I was alone, for the only other traveller was a pedlar, who sat on the box by the driver. I could make out they were talking of how well off the inhabitants of the houses and farms high up on the mountains were in summer when they could keep their cows with them all the time, but on the other hand how hard it was for them in winter shut up by snow and the danger of avalanches. . . .

“Jesus Maria das war ihr letztes Wort  
Die Lahn da nimmt sie grimmig fort,”

as is said in one of the inscriptions about accidents. . . . At Lienz I found a good-sized town and large though old-fashioned hotel. The wall of my room is 4 feet thick which makes it very dark as there is only one window—on to a little strip of flower and vegetable garden and orchard—maize fields beyond and of course the obligatory mountain. . . .

KÖTSCHACH,

*Saturday, September 25th.*

• • • •  
This large village is pretty but defective in paths of egress—one is choked by fences and gardens for some minutes. I like a good village green with a fine old lime tree (according to old German custom and often to be seen hereabouts) and paths radiating thence in every direction. Lienz also is rather difficult to get out of between its two rivers and railways. It is a curious thing to come upon a vast station at the foot of so many wild mountains. I do not object. Once 3,000 feet above it and the sight far below one moves one as little as the thought of any railway 100 miles off would. . . .

I am going to a still colder place so I hope to get fires at least, which will make the evenings cheerful. As the time in the day during which one can enjoy oneself out of doors becomes shorter, I look forward more to the occupations of winter with bright fires and good lighting—and I am already making good resolutions for the arrangement of time. For the first time in my life for more than twenty years I expect to spend the dark months in a comfortable home where I shall be quite free to have no waste of time—and at least I hope to accomplish one thing, that the days should seem too short for all I want to do. But I have still four weeks more of banishment in the beautiful world of nature, and then how gladly should I leave it for ever if it were the last time I should have to pass so long a time where you are not.

PLECKEN,

*Tuesday, September 28th, 1880.*

I went up to the Italian frontier which is hardly half-an-hour from here. The pass is a narrow cleft between two walls of rock—there were several Italian customs guards lounging on the grass looking out for people with merchandise. They have a miserable hovel to sleep in by turns. . . .

I sent for a guide for the Kellerwand, but as he did not appear I walked by myself up the Pollineck, only about 1,130 metres above here where one is about 1,200 metres over the Adriatic. A thick hoar frost covered the ground at eight when I started, but the sun shone bright and warmed me up. I passed a deserted alp where some horses were grazing in happy freedom, but except some sheep which I heard but did not see I saw no more of domestic animals or man till I descended again to the valley. The abandonment of the mountains is here the sign that the happy summer time is gone. My way was mostly up open grass sides and ridges so I constantly had views of ever-increasing extent and interest. Two thousand feet above Plecken I began to see over the frontier mountains the Venetian highland province of Carnia, then, through a wide gap in the mountains, the hilly country about Gemma where the Tagliamento bursts into the plain—further the vast level plain of Udine bounded in the extreme distance (eighty miles off) by the white line of the lagoons of Aquileja—beyond which I saw the dark open sea losing itself in an unseizable horizon. . . . I then advanced for a little way in doubt whether a bare

limestone peak to the left or a grassy one to the right was the Polineck, but on reaching the *col* between them and looking thence straight down upon Menthan and Kötschach I saw from the position that the bare stony peak to the left was my mountain. As I ascended its steep slope of loose stones with a faint track here and there I soon left the grassy mountain to the right below me and got in no very long time to the summit whence I had a remarkable and beautiful view. A much more extensive stretch of the Mediterranean sea was visible. To the left was the Gulf of Triest with the straight low line of the cliffs of Istria beyond—100 miles off I should think. The sea had now caught the sun and shone with pearly lustre (seemingly calm as a mill pond—but at that distance who can tell) as far as a clear cut horizon at a distance I cannot estimate—more than 100 miles, but how much? Between the sea and land was the double strip of littoral and lagoon. Northwest I saw various glaciers I supposed to be in the Oetz Thal, Rainthal—and the Venediger. The Glockner chain was wrapped in a formidable mass of vapour.

*September 29th.*

The afternoon was advancing when I got out and went westwards up a valley. I passed near some people making bonfires at the edge of the forest, for what purpose I don't know. One woman among them sang some of those quaint peasant melodies one hears out of doors so much in Italy; they are of few notes like Oriental melodies. This woman sang in shouting tones so as to be heard across the valley—it had a good effect. The valley was like a prison—

so locked in by forbidding precipices—south the inaccessible cliffs of the Kellerwand crowned by steeples and scarred by caverns and clefts.

*September 30th.*

I saw the fires lit yesterday and still kept up by the people of the Valentine Alp who had been all night with their illumination. That alp is let to Italians. It seems the bonfires were for Michaelmas day which was yesterday—that is more poetical than turning it into St. Goose, though one need not have prevented the other if they had had the creature of whom I once heard Browning quote these lines :

“ Of all the British volatiles  
The goose must be preferred  
There is so much of nutriment  
In that unthinking bird.” . . .

*Friday, October 1st.*

I have scaled the Kellerwand. . . . We reached the top of the Kollinkofel at nine and I stopped for an hour for breakfast and then had a hard climb of two hours down and up ravines, over steeples, and round walls, to the highest point of the Kellerwand 330 feet higher than the Kollinkofel and 9,000 above the sea. I got the most lovely view I have had this year—extending from the Hohe Wilde to Croatia, the frontiers of upper Austria to the sea which was however very faint and hazy. The sun was hot and not a breath of wind—the colouring of the countless chains of peaks one behind the other beautiful as fairyland. I staid an hour gazing at the little bit of the world round me that seemed so vast, and returned the same way to the Kollinkofel, which had been the

prelude to the last difficult adventure for this year. As we slowly and carefully descended its turf steps we saw a lämmergeier some distance below. Its great size was made apparent by the great quickness of its advance without seeming to go fast. On approaching the Italian alp at the foot I saw their cows clambering like goats in dangerous and difficult places. A good-looking boy of resolute mien was running about with the agility of a dog to bring them under their sheds for the night, shouting and singing. The hut and sheds were built touching the bottom of one of the precipices enclosing the little alp—the rock served as one of their walls. The boy hit the refractory or quarrelsome cows unmercifully with his stick, which caused immediate obedience. They leave the mountain in three days. As the sun was setting I did not stop for the gathering in of the herd, pretty as it was.

HERMAGOR,

*Sunday evening, October 3rd, 1880.*

Here I got your letter, but I could not write at once not being yet able to collect myself. I know these wounds are curable, but I can hardly hope ever to be cured for a reason which perhaps alone would make it undesirable for you to associate your life with mine—I am too friendless, so we are not on equal terms—consequently I have none of those distractions to expect which in ordinary cases may obliterate the acutest sickness and sadness of heart. Least of all could such a sham as the pitiable cure of “the grapes are sour.” I might repeat the loss was not great as long as you like, but I should none the less continue to feel that it was.

“ Und wüssten sie mein wehe  
Die goldnen sternelein.  
Sie kämen aus ihrer Höhe  
Und sprächen trost mir ein.”

This morning it was cold and cloudy and I think the Indian summer of last week is nearly over. In the afternoon, however, the sun was warm. I walked at haphazard, and was saddened still more on starting, by some cruel men shooting a squirrel on a tree close to the churchyard. The poor little thing fell whining piteously. . . .

BLEIBERG,

*Tuesday, October 5th.*

. . . . . When I came in to supper the landlord came and talked to me. He was born in the Italian valley just south of Plecken and left it barefoot when ten. Now he is the proprietor of plenty of land and forest at Hermagor and a large thriving inn, is married and has two grown-up sons who occupy themselves with agriculture, sporting, and the post and telegraph office. He introduced silkworms with great success till the disease came, and has tried and is trying all the different sorts of maize to find which is the best. He is fond of flowers and cultivates in his garden some rare alpine plants, which he takes care in winter to cover well with snow and ice. He gave me a specimen of a flower found last year in an almost inaccessible place—and a species never before discovered. He told me the Latin name which has been given to it—but I have already forgotten it. I did not tell him who the botanist was to whom I meant to send it. He also told me much about the animals—

small dangerous hill-vipers which every year kill some barefooted children getting berries—large harmless marsh snakes 10 feet long which eat frogs and catch them by drawing them in with their breath. It seems some people eat these snakes and think them delicate. Then there are lämmergeiers, powerful enough to knock a man down with the wind from their wings, 7 feet in span. Last year there was a visit from a wolf coming from Carniola. After killing many foals of a precious breed, and wandering about great distances ravaging everywhere, he was hunted down with great difficulty by hundreds of people. He was so hard pressed he went many days without food and carried various bullets about in him before receiving the final wound.

TARVIS,

*Thursday morning, October 7th.*

On Tuesday I left Hermagor by the one-horse post chaise a little before six on a cloudy autumn morning. The villages I passed were no longer German but Slovene, a language spoken also in Carniola and southern Styria, and most resembling I believe Servian and Croatian.

Everywhere the maize harvest was going on, and the barns full of piles of ears which people were picking out of the husk to hang up on their balconies. A funny little pig watched his opportunity and prowled into the open door of a barn to steal some, but was soon whipped out. He tried to linger about but was quickly driven out of sight. Before long the road entered a hideous gorge full of mining works, and defaced by enormous mounds of refuse covering the

mountains. A high wind rose and clouds of dust rushed past. At half-past eleven I reached the inn of Bleiberg. The weather was so unpromising for the next day, that after waiting for some coffee I set off at one for the Dobratsch up an abrupt desolate gorge down which two years ago came an avalanche that destroyed many houses and people. Some wooden houses were carried by the avalanche wind bodily for some distance; others were turned upside down, many only knocked over sideways. Various people were killed by curious accidents. A woman's arm was caught in the stove and consumed. When I arrived at the summit I found I had ascended from Bleiberg 1,250 metres. . . . I went down by the principal path—not narrow and straight like the one I came up. For half the way down I had a wide and distant view as far as Styria—and immediately below me the pretty-looking town of Villach near the confluence of the Drave and Gail. As I wandered rather sadly down from the Alp to the forest, I seemed to myself to be on the broad road that leads to ruin—if not already arrived at that destination. It was as if after undertaking a desperate climb a stone on which I hung gave way and I must drop down the abyss. But presently I was inspired with a better thought than those—to try and have faith that we shall all meet again purified and delivered from earthly miseries and mistakes. After the alternate hot and cold fits of feverish dread of the last three days, I felt I could be rather quieter if I did not turn away from the hope that we might be friends in a heavenly sense even if a time comes when we may meet no more on earth. That very morning

on the way from Hermagor to Nötsch I had read an inscription on a roadside chapel :—

“ Wer Gottes Wege geht  
Der ist mit sich selbst in Frieden  
Und hat der Himmel schon  
In seiner Brust hienieden,”<sup>1</sup>

and been struck by its being placed there as a lesson or consolation for any troubled spirit that passed that way. It will be very hard sometimes, but if I do lose all I care about on earth, I will try and not lose hope and strength.

I got back to Bleiberg at a quarter to five. The landlady would not at first believe I had been to the top—she said I could not have returned so soon. . . .

FLITSCH,  
*Saturday evening, October 9th.*

I crossed the river Koritenza close to its confluence with the Isouzo where the two together make a delightful peninsula joined to the mainland by an isthmus so narrow there is only just room to pass. On the peninsula there is a grass field ending on all sides with little cliffs. The Koritenza takes its name from the Slavonic word *Korito*, meaning *trough* or *gorge*. Having crossed it on a primitive plank bridge, I walked up the trough of the Isouzo till I found a bridge, which I crossed, and went up a strong couloir where I was pelted, I believe unintentionally, with some big stones by the goats above. I got into

<sup>1</sup> “ He who walks in God’s way  
Is with himself at peace  
And hath already Heaven  
In his own breast.”

a beech wood stretching many miles without a break. For a long way I was in the half daylight of these trees getting hardly a glimpse of view through their foliage. But at last I arrived at the sharp top of the Jauerscik (*Jauer* means squirrel in Slavonic) which is grass and rock with only a few beech shrubs. A scirocco gale was blowing and had veiled all the sky and most of the mountains with dim clouds—now and then there was a short flood of sunshine. I was glad to get into the shelter of the dark melancholy wood which I thought so tiresome before. The Jauerscik is 5,000 feet above the sea—Flitsch being 1,500.

The people here speak a Slovene patois which the Slavonic purists are trying to free from the numerous German and Italian words it contains—only the newly-invented Slavonic words such as *dimnik* for chimney instead of *rauchfang* and *mesec* for moon instead of *luna* are not yet well understood by the people. When for the first time a priest preached in new Slavonic from the pulpit instead of the dialect they talked, none of them understood what he was saying.

FLITSCH,

*Monday, October 11th, 1880.*

This morning I came into a beech wood so thick that with the gloomy weather I climbed higher and higher without seeing where I was going—and when I came out of the trees I found myself on a narrow band of turf with precipices both above and below. Underneath was a forest and alp called Karnica. The wall of rock above was the side of the Plesjuc (the word means ballroom—there is a plateau

at the top). I found it would be difficult to advance further so I went down again some distance and then crossed sideways till I got to a labyrinth of forest and crags where I began to feel at a loss what to do. Just then I heard a human voice shouting and singing to a flock of sheep and presently I saw a girl driving her flock on the edge of a precipice above me. She brought them down it by some ledges and clefts I had not discovered but now at once took advantage of, and after some more groping in the forest I got to the huts of the sheep-alp Goricica and under the Veliki Verk or *great peak*. Goricica is the diminutive of *gora mountain*, and means a very little mountain. Verk means *summit*. . . .

*Thursday, October 14th.*

I have been walking most of the day with glorious weather in the high places of the hills. . . . From the huts of Goricica—already above the forest—I traversed the long side of the Veliki Verk close underneath though separated by a vertical height of five furlongs and I went towards the still higher peak of the Rombon (said to be a name given it in Napoleon's wars)—as I ascended it I began to see the plain of Friuli—as blue as the boundless sea beyond it from which it was parted by the thin line of white lagoons. To the left was the silvery gulph of Triest and Istrian coast beyond. Higher I saw the Tagliamento and its mouth, the great swamp east of it, the town of Grado distinct but small as a speck on an island between the lagoons and the sea, and the delta of the Isouzo. As the sun shifted westward over the Adriatic, so the brightness on the waters followed it from the side of Triest over towards Venice. The

summit of Rombon was white with new snow, which I was glad to eat.

SACILE,

*Sunday, October 17th.*

On Friday the 15th I left Flitsch. The landlady of that place and her son drove with me as far as Cividale on their way to visit her brother somewhere near Cormons. . . . The road was both pretty and hilly down the valley to Caporetto (or Karfreit) and at every steep descent the good woman exclaimed to her son who drove "*pocasso*" (slowly) saying she drove so seldom she was nervous. She told me not a year passed without four or five violent deaths among the shepherds and woodcutters and haymakers who pass all their lives among the steeps and precipices. If they see a good patch of grass however dangerous of access and difficult to cut when there, they must try and get at it to help out their needy existence. We passed some houses of the village of Ternova built under a rock so loose they must be always in danger of masses falling down and crushing them. And that menacing rock shuts out the sun—but they cling to the spot which those before them have inhabited, and have just rebuilt one of the houses in the worst place.

## CHAPTER VI

### HOME LIFE

ON December 30th, 1880, we were married at St. Anne's, Soho. A few days before that, he had undergone the rite of baptism at the church of Holywell, Oxford, thus by his own act rectifying his parents' omission<sup>1</sup> and making himself formally a member of the Church of England.

What can I say of the years which followed? A thousand memories assail me of the peaceful life in his beautiful house at Chelsea, of the quiet evenings by the fire, while outside the wind tore round the bend of the river, when the floor round his chair would be heaped with books; of the pleasant meetings with a few chosen friends, and the pride of seeing him gradually win the appreciation which was his due in the more intelligent society of the day. I had a passion for art and he arranged a beautiful studio for me to work in. He lived among his books. Neither of us had any special liking for London, but it was home, and we both agreed in hating the modern habit of perpetually moving from place to place, so utterly destructive of sane occupation. This habit was not then so universally rampant as it

<sup>1</sup> See letter to Mrs. Pollen, January 18th, 1879, p. 69.

is now. Nevertheless, I think we were certainly exceptions among people of our own generation in that often, for six months and more at a time, we never took a railway ticket or slept out of our own house. No doubt if his early education had not deprived him of all opportunities of learning to shoot and hunt—an omission for which he always owed some grudge to Lady Byron—he would have found more pleasure in country house visiting, but the times when he was persuaded to accept an invitation of this kind could be counted on the fingers of one hand.

Another reason for leading a quiet life was very straitened means, the result of his having, in his inexperience of building matters, allowed himself to be saddled with far too large a house.

He was at this time assiduous in attending the House of Lords. On all matters of domestic politics he was content to be a silent listener, enjoying from his seat on the cross-benches the cut and thrust of the recognised gladiators of that time: Lords Salisbury, Derby, Granville, and, most eloquent of all, the Duke of Argyll. The few occasions when he nerved himself to intervene were when Egyptian matters were the subject of debate. The beneficent rule of Sir Evelyn Baring<sup>1</sup> had then hardly begun, and Wentworth was not alone in detesting the necessity which forced the Government of Mr. Gladstone to crush the unhappy subjects of the

<sup>1</sup> Earl of Cromer.

Khedive when, under Arabi Pasha, they rose against his corrupt tyranny. The efforts made by Wilfrid Blunt and Sir William Gregory to secure for Arabi at least a fair trial and an adequate defence had his warm admiration and sympathy. He heartily rejoiced that they were successful in saving Arabi's life and in averting from England the disgrace of conniving at the commission of a judicial murder.

Wentworth spoke well, with a good voice and perfect enunciation, and he was never lengthy. After a hot protest that he made against the sending of an expedition to Suakin under General Graham in 1884, he was congratulated by members of the Opposition and asked to speak again. But as a rule he found himself championing unpopular causes, and encountering the strong prejudice and hostility which had been earned by Wilfrid Blunt, from whom it was naturally supposed that he derived his information about Egyptian matters. He was, in fact, very far from seeing eye to eye in all things with his brother-in-law ; and he deplored the latter's inveterate habit of opposing the representatives of his country abroad on any and every occasion, and of invariably imputing blame to British officials under all circumstances. It was the bent of Wentworth's own mind to appreciate and sympathise with all ancient and simple forms of civilisation. And just as he loved to share, as far as he could, the traditional life of the

longed to protect the African nomads and their age-long customs from disintegration and corruption.

In May, 1885, the Earl of Wemyss moved a protest against the evacuation of the Soudan by British troops. Wentworth opposed the motion, and warmly congratulated Lord Granville and the Government on the "moral courage with which they had wiped out a bad debt." He urged them to consider :—

. . . the enfranchisement of Suakin from all foreign, Egyptian or Turkish misrule, and on that basis to conclude a real and durable peace in the Soudan. . . . Those who expected the Sudanese to take over in a lump all the results of European civilisation—cast iron, cotton, capitalists, not to speak of public-houses, police and prisons, for the accommodation of all the adventurers who would not fail to rush into a newly opened-out country, builders of railways, and founders of settled governments by paper resolutions—were too much dominated by the idea of a uniform plan for the human species, which they would treat as if all started from the same point, proceeded on one line, and must arrive at an identical goal. They forgot to reckon with the indelible characteristics of different races. The germ of a modern English statesman or peer had been contained in the contemporaries of Alfred or William the Norman ; but Arabs could by no possible process of natural selection and survival of the fittest become the ancestors of men resembling their lordships. Every race was confined to its own type and ideal, which it might or might not realise, but from which it could not deviate. There was an equivocation of

meaning in such words as “barbarism” and “civilisation,” which would mislead if they proceeded to convert philanthropic formulas and commonplaces into action upon mankind in distant parts of the world. It was a serious mistake to regard nomadic life as necessarily barbarous because it was incompatible with that particular kind of refinement which we habitually and exclusively called “civilisation.”

Wentworth was a convinced Home Ruler, and was one of the small minority of forty-one who voted for Mr. Gladstone’s Bill when it was thrown out by the Peers in 1893.<sup>1</sup>

The yearly expeditions to the mountains always continued, sometimes to Dauphiné and the Pyrenees, but more often to the Swiss and Tyrolese Alps. When the summer days came round he was no more to be kept back from the land of his desires than a homing swallow. To the neighbourhood of the great peaks I hardly ever accompanied him. But for many happy weeks and months of almost every year we wandered together among the lesser heights, exploring the little-known passes, and the lovely valleys, far away from the ordinary ways of communication. We lodged in little homely inns, where the foreign tourist is well-nigh unknown, sometimes in peasants’ houses, or with a priest, and once in a water-mill, where, when the great wheel was turning, the rush of sound reduced us to communicating by signs. Whether we were in

French or German or Italian-speaking lands, he was always at home, and seemed to understand every local dialect by instinct. All the ways of all mountain folk were to him dear and familiar, and wherever we went he was quickly recognised as a friend. Indeed, except that we carried travelling baths, and that his demands for hot water were apt to be at times appalling, he had no needs but what these simple folk could supply. To travel with him was to be made free of a quite new and delicious country, a national life full of old legends and traditions and the love of the wild creatures. He always mocked at the idea that in order to escape from the complications and vulgarities of civilised life—so-called—it was necessary to sail to distant continents and to consort with the naked savage.

This life, however, was not serious climbing, for which his passion never did more than slumber. Though he never joined the Alpine Club, his record was at that time known to a good many of its members. The following short account of his achievements may interest his fellow-climbers.

His first recorded climb was the ascent of the Rigi at the age of eight. By the age of twenty-five he had ascended most of the well-known Swiss giants, and had altogether made a record of fifty important climbs. He was at Zermatt in 1865 and saw the bodies of Lord Francis Douglas and his companions brought down after the terrible disaster on the

Matterhorn, a sobering experience, which may account for the postponement of his own attack on that mountain until 1871, when he successfully ascended it. He always considered that the difficulties of this ascent were over-rated, probably as the effect of the well-known tragedy on the popular imagination.

For many years in middle life, when financial burdens had grown on him, he could but seldom afford the high fees demanded by the best guides. This meant the ruling out for the time of all really high ascents. He took this with much philosophy, for, as every climber knows, there is plenty of adventure to be had at the lower altitudes, and, in fact, often more scope for the skill and resource of the climber himself than when he is under the tutorship of really first-rate guides. There was much compensation, too, in avoiding the monster hotels which beleaguer the more famous peaks, and the horrid intimacies of nights spent in the more frequented club huts. As time went on he gravitated more and more to the south side of the Alps, and especially to the region known as the Dolomites, a name against which he always protested, for he said that there were dolomites everywhere in the Alps. Rock-climbing rather than snow-work had always been his passion ; and of all his climbs those that I think he recalled with most enthusiasm were of the great bare peaks and crags that surround San Martino di Castrozza and Cortina.

But he had always been haunted by the thought

of certain monsters of Savoy and Dauphiné, the Aiguille Verte, the Grépon, the Meije, and others standing about them, which he must needs overcome before he died. The Aiguille Verte he climbed in 1891, when we were staying with our friends, Lord and Lady Monkswell, in the delightful Chalet des Rochers, above St. Gervais. The Meije he achieved in 1895, and the Aiguille du Grépon in 1897, when he was fifty-eight years old ! He had been very eloquent in early life as to the unfitness of any man aged over fifty for serious climbing. But now that he had himself passed that respectable age, no reminder of his former wisdom had the smallest effect upon him.

I give some extracts from his letters :—

ZERMATT,

*July 7th, 1895.*

On Thursday, the 4th, I went up another fairly benign "monster," the Nordend of Monte Rosa, having slept at a "club hut" at the Untere Plattje. I started at two in the morning with two guides, reached the sharp ridge of the summit in seven and a half hours in an intensely cold wind, but had a beautiful view from the lakes of Lombardy to the Maritime Alps, and was down at Zermatt at 6.30 in the evening. . . .

LE FRESNAY,

*July 20th, 1895.*

On Thursday evening at a quarter past nine I and my guides left La Bérarde, and after twelve hours' ascent, including five hours' severe rock climbing, we

reached the summit of the Grande Meije at a quarter past nine on Friday (yesterday) morning. Another party of French alpinists and their guides followed close upon us, and there were assembled there on that Friday morning thirteen souls, all of whom, in spite of the omen, are still living. To complete my pilgrimage on this Mecca of climbers, I decided to descend on the other side, and we accordingly descended by rocks of considerable difficulty to the so-called Brèche Zsigmondy, named after a young Austrian climber, who first ascended the Great Meije from that side, and a few days after perished in an attempt on another (the north-west) side of the Meije. From the Brèche Zsigmondy we ascended the Meije Centrale (only about sixty feet lower than the Grande Meije), but with very great difficulty in one place close to the Brèche Zsigmondy, and some anxiety—a narrow slanting cleft up a precipitous wall above overhanging, so that there was little room. We got through this place safely after long and hard work and reached the summit of the Meije Centrale about two—all of the way rather difficult ; thence a short but very hard descent on to the glacier above La Grave, where we arrived at a quarter past eight in the evening. On the whole I have never had so difficult a climb, and two or three places were of exceptional difficulty, to me at least. . . .

Here are some flowers taken high up on the southern precipices. . . .

GENEVA,

*Tuesday, July 23rd, 1895.*

I send you some photographs of the Meije, three

from the west, on the side from the Chateleret. I have put some red dots roughly showing the passage we followed from the glacier up the rocks successively to the Grand Couloir, the Mur, the Pas du Chat, the Glacier Carré, the Cheval Rouge, a knife edge of red rock across which one sits with both feet in the air ; the Tête du Capucin, the summit of the Grande Meije (G. M.), the Brèche Zsigmondy (Z.), the "Gratwanderung," thence to the Meije Centrale (M. C.). After the descent of the wall of this last to the last dot, we went down the snow wall of the north side to the glaciers of La Grave. . . .

## ZERMATT,

*Sunday, August 11th, 1895.*

Yesterday I had a nice little climb up the Gabelhorn, which is highly and not unjustly honoured among the monsters of this place. About three hours of interesting rock work from the bergschrund to the sharp Grecian-nosed summit. Not as precipitous and lovely as the ascent of the Meije, but better than the Roth-horn, and at least as good as the Matterhorn. . . . I am sorry to say it is raining again this evening. . . . If it will only be fine the next two days, I wish before leaving to visit the most venerable of all the Zermatt sanctuaries of monster worship—the Dent Blanche. I have had such bad luck with weather, etc., that, including the Gabelhorn, I have this summer only been up seven peaks of more than 13,000 feet high, and I should easily have doubled that number if Old Harry had not spoilt so much of the time. . . .

Yours . . .

He ascended the Dent Blanche six days later.

ARROLLA,

*Saturday, July 10th, 1897.*

There are a few English and one or two German tourists here, but I have had no conversation with any of them. Gentinetta, however, compared notes with some climbing men without guides (now gone) and found them rather disappointed that we crossed the Aiguilles Rouges in only sixteen hours, they having taken twenty-three, and thinking we should either fail altogether or be benighted.

HOTEL DU MONT BLANC, CHAMONIX,

*Monday, August 2nd, 1897.*

I had, as I wrote you by postcard yesterday, a most charming day with heavenly weather on the glorious Grépon, which I love more than ever after capturing and not being captured by it. We started, my three guides and myself, at 1 a.m. on Saturday, July 31st, up and traversing turf slants and immense boulders till dawn, then up a glacier and under formidable icebergs and snow-strewn rocks for two hours more. After breakfast on champagne and *pâté de foie gras*, up more glaciers and icebergs and a rock and snow couloir between the Aiguille des Charmoz and the Aiguille du Grépon, to a very severe ice and rock couloir, up which we had a hard struggle to the foot of the celebrated Mummary chimney, perhaps 60 feet high—I think rather less. Joseph Aristide Simond swarmed up with great facility, and I think he does well with all

foothold to gasp for breath ; then the younger and lighter of the other guides climbed up slightly help(ed) by the rope round him, of which Joseph had the end. Then the ice axes and provisions were drawn up ; then I went up with considerable hauling, and lastly Gentinetta, also largely assisted by the other two guides tugging at the top. After that we had many hard places on the way along the knife, or rather saw, edge of the ridge of rocks, to the summit. A promontory 60 feet high between two precipices to be let down by rope backwards, the last man descending by the reserve rope doubled round a head of rock, the rope then drawn on round its support. Just before the very summit a narrow cave, quite underground, to slip, or rather struggle, through, a veritable crack for earwigs. From the summit a lovely view ; on one side the North Pole, on the other green Savoy in July. After enjoying all this and a bottle of champagne, fortunately not broken by the terrible cliffs, down more cliffs with a mixture of reserve ropes and slipping back astride down abrupt edges in the wall-like cliffs. I think about four in the afternoon we emerged from the difficult rocks and descended a glacier till we reached the line of ascent of the morning, for we crossed the peak descending exactly on the opposite end, and we reached Montanvert by lantern light a little before ten after twenty-one hours, which were among the most interesting I have ever known. I am so much in love with the whole thing that I long to make the same passage two or three times more and examine the wonders and beauties of those striking red and grey rocks more exhaustively.

I believe all this will interest you little, but if I could have photographed the whole view from the summit, even you would have considered some of it beautiful. I saw all the green mountains near Taninges.<sup>1</sup>

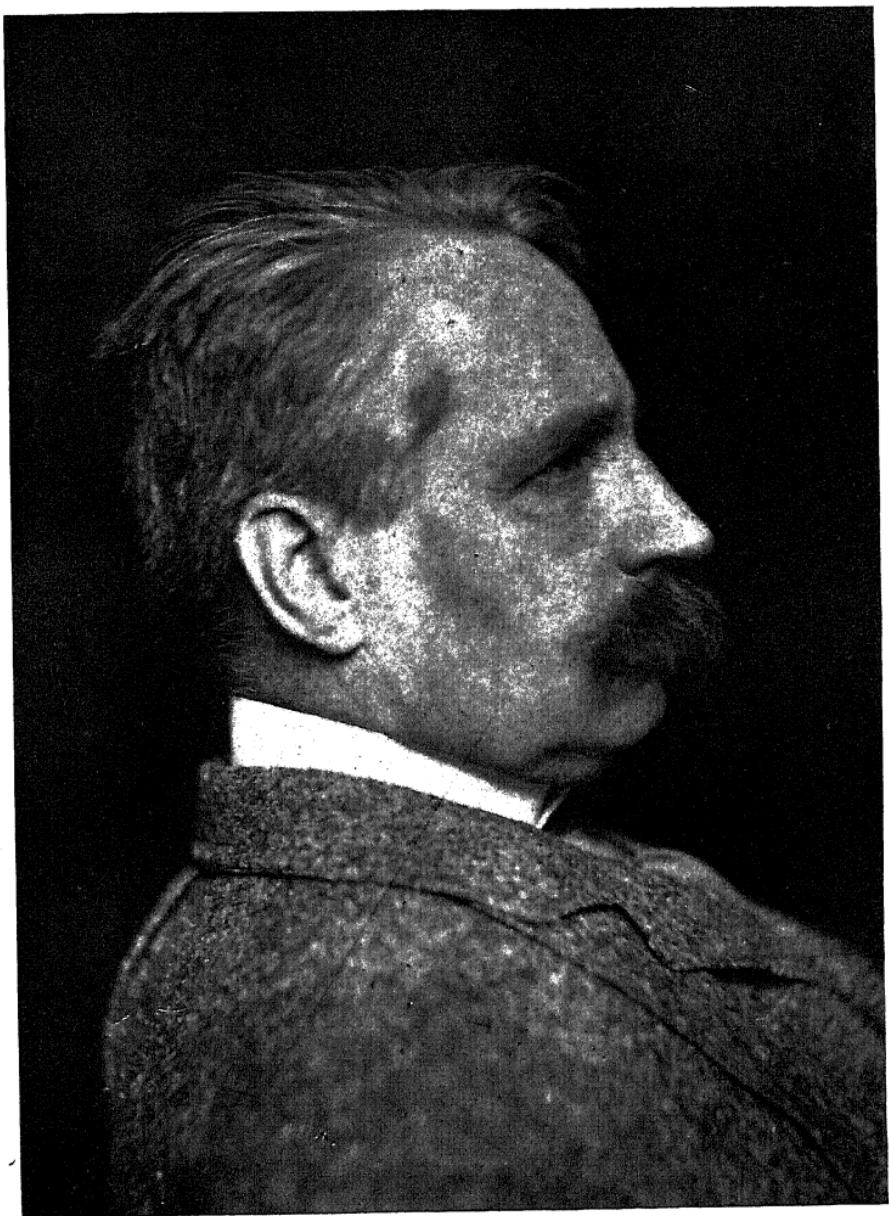
I have a propitiatory offer of some red agate bowls to make, which I bought at Montanvert, found (the raw material) in the Mont Blanc chain. . . .

ZERMATT,  
*Sunday, August 15th, 1897.*

It is all very well to wander about sometimes in fairly easy places, and I enjoy that kind of thing very much without guides ; but when I do have guides, I only care for the very best rock climbs that can be found ; and I never met with any to be compared to the Grépon for every kind of beauty of rock, and unsurpassable human interest, being near the limit of what one conceives to be attainable. As Joseph Aristide said, "*C'est tout juste.*" But it is just possible without danger, the ropes being sound and the climbers too, and I hope and expect that I shall go over it again once or twice, so as to impress all the details thoroughly in my mind.

The allusions are to a mock dispute which we two perennially carried on as to the charms of the mountain world. He pretended to think that the anxieties of the poor "clucking hen" at home were based on complete ignorance and incapacity to admire the greater Alps. I had to retaliate by calling them

<sup>1</sup> A village in Savoy ; we had lived there for some weeks the year before.



RALPH EARL OF LOVELACE

1896



freaks and monstrosities of Nature, far too much glorified by their adorers, and also by pointing out that only lunatics thought it necessary to go to the tops of them in order to enjoy them !

Eighteen hundred and ninety-eight found him again in South Tirol, climbing the Fünfiger Spitze by the Schmidtkamin, the Pala di S. Martino, Gran Odla, Sass Maor, Kleine Zinne, Winklerturm, Delagothurm, Cima della Madonna, etc. In July, 1899, he wrote :—

PERRA,

*Friday, July 28th, 1899.*

My climbs have now culminated in the “traversata” of the Rosengarten, and a second ascent of the Delagothurm, close to which I passed on the way down from the Rosengarten, and as the weather was superb, it would have (been) throwing away one’s chances to neglect visiting again that most wonderful pillar, so I gave up a much less interesting ascent for a repetition of the second best climb in what I know of the Alps. It was yesterday morning that I reached again the narrow resting place between unfathomable abysses, whence one sees the green world of summer in all its loveliness, but from which one has the sensation of being cut off for ever by a drop on every side, which one’s eyes can hardly bear to contemplate. I and my two guides passed more than an hour on the summit, basking in the sun with not a breath of wind, gazing on distant towns and villages amidst green mountains and green plateaus.

and sombre forests, and making up one's mind to face the walls up which we had crawled—that is still with one's face in the rock, crawling down backwards. Now after two ascents and descents I know every inch of the rock, but it hardly seems less difficult with intimate acquaintance. Almost every bit of the precipice is difficult, and in two places—fissures—the difficulty is extreme and could not be surpassed without reaching the impossible. . . .

The second guide, Zagonel, had never been there before, and being a good climber, was delighted, but astonished at the difficulty, which he had supposed must be greatly exaggerated.

Even these were not his last climbs. In 1902, when he was aged sixty-three, he wrote a warm recommendation for his favourite guide Michele Bettega, of Primiero, describing various feats that they had done together the year before, including a *fourth* ascent of the Delagothurm. He wound up with :—

In all these excursions Bettega had the able co-operation of Bortolo Zagonel, and, as is known to all mountaineers, the best guides have the best opportunity for their most brilliant work when associated with each other. Bettega is now rich in experience and still in the prime of life. I have never known him employ more skill, strength and judgment than during the above-mentioned excursions. His eye for selecting the line of attack is perfectly marvellous, but is equalled by the resolution and resource with which he deals with the details as they arise. I have never known him completely baffled in any of the

things we have undertaken together, and he has rarely had even to modify the original plan. I have only to add that I look forward to further expeditions in his company.

I have copied this because I want to add my own warm thanks to these two excellent fellows, his constant companions during those last years, who gave him many hours of happiness, and to whom, when his own strength and activity were beginning to fail, he must have many a time owed the safety of his life.

Where are they now? Their country of the Southern Tirol has been the bone of contention between Austria and Italy, and the tornado of war has swept over their homes. The younger man, Zagonel, will certainly have been pressed into the Austrian Army; Bettega may possibly have been beyond military age. Where their hearts will have been—whether with Austria and her old Emperor, loved and venerated by all Tirol, to whom they were loyal enough when I knew them, or with Italy, whose language they spoke—I cannot tell.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE BYRON PAPERS

THE year 1880, towards the close of which we were married, should, according to Lady Byron's will, have seen the thorough examination of her papers by the three trustees and the formulating of some decision regarding them, but nothing was done. Miss Mary Carpenter and Miss Frances Carr were now dead, and Mr. Bathurst was not the man to cope single-handed with a difficult situation. On the occasion of our marriage Wentworth and his father were reconciled, and remained for some years on cordial terms. But nothing could be got from Lord Lovelace about the missing papers. Always unapproachable, he had become doubly so from age and extreme deafness, and he was always particularly hard of hearing on subjects that he disliked. The danger that, if provoked, he might put the papers out of his son's reach in the future could not be ignored. There was nothing for it but patience. And so matters drifted on until December, 1893, when, at the age of eighty-nine, the old man passed away.

Within a few weeks of his death the long-desired treasure of important papers was handed over by his

widow and personal heirs to his son and successor, who soon found that they contained all that he had anticipated. Mr. Bathurst having also died, and the whole trust being now at an end, the whole of Lady Byron's legacy of papers were at last united and in the hands of her grandson. Amidst all the manifold preoccupations which now fell upon Wentworth in his new condition, he gave all his spare time to supervising the making of careful typewritten copies of a large portion of these papers,<sup>1</sup> with no more definite intention at that time than to secure that several duplicates of certain evidence, in the clearest and most comprehensible form, should be preserved in different places. But events were preparing which were eventually to force him to action regarding this evidence.

On May 12th, 1896, Lovelace (as we must now call him) received a letter from Mr. John Murray, fourth in the dynasty of the well-known publishers, asking him to be "editor in chief" of the new edition of Byron's poems and letters, etc., with the assistance of a "subordinate editor to do the rough work," and after a few hours of hesitation he wrote accepting the proposal in terms as courteous and friendly as those in which it had been made. For this mistake I must take my full share of blame. It seemed to us both then, and still seems, that to decline the power of controlling what

<sup>1</sup> This accurate and conscientious work was carried out for him by Miss Marion Wedderspoon, then of 9, Gracechurch Street; see ante, pp. 42, 43.

would probably be the definitive version of Byron's life-story was to lose a great opportunity, and one which in the future he might bitterly regret. I think he had some prescience of the difficulty of exercising control, but he could not refuse to make the attempt. His idea then was that by rigidly excluding all intimate correspondence with or about Mrs. Leigh subsequent to a certain date, he could avoid confirming either Mrs. Beecher Stowe's revelations on the one hand or the calumnies against Lady Byron on the other. The events that followed will be told best in a narrative that he sent later to Lady Dorchester.<sup>1</sup>

*3rd February, 1899.*

I am afraid I blundered badly in the beginning in not bringing him (Murray) to particulars, and pointing out all the difficulties that I could myself then think of, when he first informed me, nearly three years ago, that he positively meant to bring out a definitive collection of the poetical and prose writings and asked me to undertake the "editorship." I replied that I was willing to do what I could for him, but could not pledge myself as to how much that might be, and declined any settlement of payment for materials, or work I might do, till I could see my way distinctly as to doing anything that would have pecuniary value. I accepted being editor in a vague way, rather *ad referendum*, for future arrangement when it became a more practical question, for I did not understand that Murray was in haste about any-

thing except the poetry, a new and trustworthy text of which appeared to me at that time to be the principal object in his mind. He had then, I think, for some time been working at it through Mr. Coleridge and others. I was at that time just going abroad as usual to spend my summer in the Alps, without having at all taken in that Murray had any strong desire to beat Henley out of the field, and hasten on his preparations for such a purpose. I did not think either of the matter, as I ought to have done, from a publisher's point of view, and press to an issue who was to be the ultimate judge of the nature of the undertaking. I think I ought to have seen that it could only be the man who found the money, and that all connection of a responsible kind between me and another man's business enterprise could not possibly work, for I could not, on what was to me a family matter, enter into questions of £ s. d., even if I were supposed to understand them. If I had pressed him I have no doubt I should have found Mr. Murray perfectly frank, and that, with all his desire for the perfectly free use of all the materials I might possess, and every one else might possess, and entirely according to his own views rather than those of Lord Byron's family and friends, he would never have affected much inclination to offer me the powers of a real editor, though while I was abroad I soon found myself being advertised much more quickly than I had foreseen, for I thought the execution of the plan was still remote. Still, when I returned to England, there was no talk at all about the prose, but I was shown a lot of proofs for the first volume of poetry, which still appeared to be the

only practical question, and no difficulties occurred to me as connected with this part of the subject. I spent many hours, and even days, labouring through the proofs of the "Hours of Idleness," making a certain number of notes and suggestions, of which I hardly know whether a single one was ever attended to.

About this time Henley's volume of early letters<sup>1</sup> came out, and I remember that it was you who first spoke to me about them, and pointed out several that you thought it a great pity should ever have been printed. I consequently looked through, and for the first time indeed read, all Lord Byron's early letters, and very quickly arrived at the conclusion that hardly any of the letters before 1812, published by Dallas, Moore, and the Hodgson family, ought ever to have been published, or ought to be included in any collection that received contributions of hitherto unpublished letters from Lord Byron's family. I had many discussions with Murray about this, and informed him of the impossibility of any sanction from me to the republication of the letters to Miss Pigott, Mrs. Byron, and Hodgson. At the same time I told him that if I were editor I could add to a collection, either in whole or in part, a certain number of letters, chiefly to Mrs. Leigh, and I showed him copies of these letters, which, however, included a good deal as to which I had by no means made up my mind, or had already determined on no account to publish. It seems that, either inadvertently or confidentially, for I cannot remember, I

<sup>1</sup> Works of Lord Byron. Edited by W. E. Henley, Vol. I.

left with him the book of copies, and that Mr. Murray himself or his brother thought leave had been given to copy and use them, and they actually put them into print, and to my great surprise and alarm I saw them in the proofs that continued to be sent to me, after I had long definitively renounced all idea of taking any part in the work. I had only shown them to Murray at the time, when I either left them in his hands or forgot to bring them away, as materials from which I might myself be inclined to make some selections if I were to act as editor, but I never dreamt of putting them into any one else's hands, and it was a most painful surprise when I discovered the use that it had been contemplated to make of them. I entirely acquit everyone of intentional breach of confidence. Murray's explanation of it, two or three months ago, when I complained of this grave mistake, was that he had imagined they were all copies of some letters which, as you may remember, had once belonged to his father, who had bought them from some of the Leighs, and who finally very generously gave them to my sister and me, and Murray thought that I had meant to give permission for their free use. This was not quite the case, even as to the copies from that particular lot of letters, because I knew that old Mr. Murray had considered the most extreme care ought to be exercised before deciding whether, and how much, to publish out of that bundle. But my packet of copies was principally composed of letters that did not come from old Mr. Murray, but from my own family collection.

I must, however, go back to the end of 1896 or

beginning of 1897. Murray was very unwilling to let me off from being editor, of which I pointed out the growing difficulties in consequence of my objections to the Pigott letters, etc., which he was not prepared to give up. For some time he considered it to be hardly a practical question, and that the first volume of poetry was the only thing to think of, and he did not know when he should be ready to take up the prose. But, as time went on, he appeared to make up his mind more and more strongly in opposition to me, a good deal on the ground of the necessity of fighting Henley with his own weapons, and of destroying Henley and Heinemann by such an exhaustive and complete work as they could not hope to compete against. This fresh prospect of enmity with Mr. Henley, for whom personally I never felt any ill-will, finally decided me, and, after many hints which Murray had evaded all notice of, I insisted on withdrawing altogether. I, however, did not withdraw the free gift of the entire use at his pleasure of all my poetical MSS., published and unpublished, and of various other scraps which I did not think need be regarded as private family papers, and I never for a moment should have consented to accept any remuneration on this account, though it is due to Mr. Murray to say that he more than once referred to his willingness to pay for whatever he received from me. You will, I think, perfectly understand that, as things then stood, no consideration of money could possibly be allowed to form any part of the things on which I had to decide in the least objectionable way. Owing to Murray's determination to follow his own course, and the absence

of clear understanding between me and him at the beginning, it was impossible that the result should be absolutely satisfactory to any one.

I have referred to old Mr. Murray's gift to my sister and me. With the MSS. of Lord Byron's letters to his sister, there were a number of copies of them, in the handwriting of the present Mr. Murray.<sup>1</sup> These copies did not quite include the whole, though they contained much which, in my opinion, ought never to be published. Nevertheless, when I thought from various indications that Murray, having committed himself to an important publication of fresh materials, found himself insufficiently possessed of enough materials to prevent his work from being a disastrous failure, I decided to return him his own copies of these letters, to use entirely at his own discretion, if he thought fit, it being understood that I in no way sanctioned or approved of their being so used, though I did not think it right to withhold from him the power of making even an injudicious selection from them. What he has done has been, I rather think, to make no selection at all, but to print everything, and I have not the least doubt of his conscientious conviction that in this he is a much better friend to my grandfather's memory than I am or than you are, as I observe that in every single instance when any question is raised about a letter he invariably thinks that particular document is of vital importance to Lord Byron's memory, and that it is an act of justice to print it. . . .

I pass on to some printed proofs of Murray's third volume of prose, which I received in the late autumn.

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.*, John Murray IV.

I was much startled to find in it a number of letters from Lord Byron to Mrs. Leigh, which I knew were not among the copies in Mr. Murray's own handwriting, returned by me as before mentioned. I consequently called upon Mr. Murray besides writing, and then learned from him in answer to my enquiries, first, as I have said already, that by a mistake the whole of my book of copies, which had inadvertently remained for a very long time in Albemarle Street (till I accidentally missed it and wrote to enquire about it), had been copied by mistake, and found its way into print. But I also learnt for the first time that, within the last year or two, Mr. Murray had discovered in his safe an important packet of letters from Lord Byron to Mrs. Leigh, the existence of which had been unknown for many years, and I think his father was supposed to have bought them from Mrs. Leigh at a different time from the purchase of that packet which he had afterwards given to my sister and me, and Mr. Murray showed me that in one or two instances the letters of this packet were duplicates of letters in my own family papers, and included in the book of copies printed by mistake. I then told him that I did not think he ought to publish any of the letters which were duplicates of my own private papers, but that any others, which existed nowhere else, I did not think myself called upon to interfere with, though I should have done so if they had been in any hands but his own, but I was quite willing to leave the entire responsibility to him, about papers of the contents of which I was ignorant. . . . I must not fail to declare that I do not do Mr. Murray the injustice of attributing any pecuniary objects to him. It is a

question of *amour propre*, for I do not believe that any additions would now add much to the success of his book. He has turned out to possess so much more material than he was himself aware of, and still more than any one else can have anticipated, that I look on the success of his book as assured, so far as such a book can succeed at all. I am convinced that so far as I have thwarted him, it has been for his own good, or at any rate of no detriment to him, but naturally enough in the heat of his labours, and what he regards as a contest with various enemies, among whom at the moment he is almost tempted to classify me, he does not see all this as clearly as I do.

It will be seen that at this time Lovelace was still able to do justice to Mr. Murray's position and to remember the generous action of John Murray the third, but he was harassed by the knowledge that fresh trouble must arise when certain portions of Byron's correspondence came to be dealt with, and foresaw his own difficulties with regard to it. At this time he was fond of quoting Bourget's Monsieur Legrimaudet "*enchainé comme je suis par les liens de la gratitude*," but he laughed with a wry face.

In July, 1899, appeared the third volume of the "Letters and Journals," and in *The Times'* review of it special prominence was given to two statements by the editor, Mr. Rowland Prothero :—<sup>1</sup>

- (1) The fifteen letters, or extracts from letters,

from Byron to Miss Milbanke . . . are printed for the first time from copies made by the Earl of Lovelace. and

(2) No evidence exists to prove the precise nature of the charges on which Lady Byron separated from her husband.

Both these statements were profoundly irritating to Lovelace. He saw in the first (perhaps unjustly) a fresh effort to draw him into part responsibility for Mr. Murray's publication; and the second he qualified as an "amazing statement." He pressed for some "*démenti*" to be published in the next forthcoming volume, and for some months an acrimonious correspondence was carried on between him and Mr. Murray (mainly through his friend and legal adviser, Mr. Francis Smith) with the object of finding some form of words that should satisfy both parties. It proved ineffective, and Lovelace now in his exasperation threatened to restrain Mr. Murray from publishing any letters from Byron to Augusta whatsoever. He had been stimulated to this resolution by receiving an alarming set of proofs in which some very significant letters were printed *in extenso*. It will have been seen from his memorandum to Lady Dorchester that the question of the ownership of these letters bristled with difficulties. Some belonged to Lovelace's family papers, some he and his sister owed to the generosity of the late Mr. Murray, some belonged to the present Mr. Murray. But as

regards publication, all were then subject to the authority of the successors to Lord Broughton's<sup>1</sup> executors. Lady Dorchester had paramount influence with these gentlemen and Lovelace trusted to her to obtain, if necessary, legal coercion of Mr. Murray. It was inevitable that the latter should also appeal to her, with whom he had long been in friendly relations. He pointed out that the proofs had been sent to Lovelace *in extenso* so as to leave the question of excisions entirely to his judgment.

Lady Dorchester seized upon this as a basis of compromise, and since, in spite of his anger, Lovelace was very sensitive to the suggestion that he was acting unfairly, she had little difficulty in inducing him to desist. As to what portions of the letters might be safely published, let him leave it to *her*. In any case, nothing would induce her to sanction the *printing* of certain significant passages. Lovelace would have been for suppressing some letters altogether, but not for publishing them with omissions which would have the effect of turning guilty documents into apparently innocent ones ; yet this was what was eventually done. Lady Dorchester took all responsibility for the excisions, with single-minded devotion to the one object which she thought to be her duty, the protection of Byron's memory. The question of truth and justice did not trouble her. She believed that her father (Byron's friend Hobhouse) would never have permitted

<sup>1</sup> John Cam Hobhouse

anything which confirmed the story of Byron's guilt to see the light, and she must do as he would have done.

Others approved her action so far as they understood it. A granddaughter of Mrs. Leigh's who was consulted naturally accepted it gratefully. Lovelace's own ambassador to Mr. Murray, Mr. Francis Smith, wrote of "Lady Dorchester's broad and sensible view of the situation." And thus Lovelace found himself pressed into acquiescence in the very thing he had desired so ardently to prevent—a new obscuration of evidence. He dared not quarrel with Lady Dorchester. Not only could she control all questions of publication, but she herself had inherited from her father Byron's intimate letters to Lady Melbourne, still unpublished, the existence of which in other hands than his own was a constant source of anxiety to Lovelace.<sup>1</sup> Lady Dorchester was old and in feeble health. She had promised that all the Byron papers and memorials in her possession should go to Lovelace at her death. Alas ! she survived him more than seven years, and those papers that were in her hands have now for ever passed away from Byron's descendants.

As Lovelace afterwards made public his irritation against Mr. Murray, I am glad to be able to quote here from a letter written by him at this time to Miss Geraldine Leigh :—<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 42, 43.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 11, note 4.

*March 18th, 1900.*

The present Mr. John Murray is quite ready to relinquish any further publication of Lord Byron's letters to Mrs. Leigh and submits the question absolutely to the discretion of Lord Byron's executors. Nothing can be fairer or more honourable than the course he is prepared to take. He would not surrender the letters for payment of what they cost and indeed declines any pecuniary transaction. (I had suggested that that might be a fair and proper way out of the difficulty, if it should turn out to be practicable.)

But he will do nothing that is distasteful to you. The letters have been submitted to Lord Byron's executors and willingness expressed to abandon all publication of them, but after looking through them with great care, Lord Byron's executors have decided that it will suffice to strike out what is objectionable, and that there is a considerable portion of I think a dozen or fifteen letters which is absolutely innocuous, so that the publication of that part ought to be allowed if only in recognition of the very handsome and obliging manner in which Mr. Murray has met your wishes. Lord Byron's executors think, and it seems to me with good reason, that Mr. Murray is acting so fairly and considerately towards you that some acknowledgment is due; and what is now proposed can do you no harm. . . .

Regrettable as these contentions were, with their result in a breakdown of a long friendship, they had the advantage of finally ending an impossible situa-

tion. Lovelace had had an illuminating experience of the difficulties of joint control in such an enterprise as Mr. Murray's, but he had also realised something to him much more vital; namely, that he could not carry out his project of being absolutely non-committal as regards the revelations of Mrs. Beecher Stowe. The suppression of evidence which this involved *for him* was of too serious a character. Mr. Murray and his coadjutors could pursue this course quite legitimately. In fact for them it was inevitable. They were uncertain as to the truth, and they were not bound to hold a criminal investigation.

But Lovelace *knew*. And it had now come home to him that to endorse such a policy with his name would have been in fact to give negative evidence against Lady Byron. The acceptance of the editorship had been a great mistake and it was well that it had come to an end.

After this he refused to look at any more proofs. He left unopened the handsome volumes with which Mr. Murray continued to present him at intervals as they were published, and after a time he returned them to the giver. I do not think he ever knew exactly in what form the most troublesome letters finally saw the light.

It must have been in the course of the winter of 1899—1900 that a scene took place which remains vividly in my mind. My husband was walking up

and down the room trying to ease the fever of his soul by talking out the everlasting dilemma, how to hide the faults of one ancestor without doing black injustice to another, how to suppress truth without adding to a mountain of lies. I was listening for the hundredth time with indescribable weariness, and in secret revolt at the sacrifice of *his* life, at the constant waste of his talents and energy in the effort to solve an insoluble problem and at the hateful atmosphere of the miserable story which he was compelled to have constantly in his thoughts. He wound up his complaints with " Oh ! if I could have peace ! "

And I, thinking aloud rather than intending to suggest any definite action, exclaimed :

" There never will be peace till the truth has once for all been acknowledged ! "

He wheeled round in his walk and faced me :

" Ah ! you think so, do you ? "

And I realised that my words had confirmed the thought that was already formed in his mind.

## CHAPTER VIII

### "ASTARTE"

FROM this time forward the only question between us was how and in what form the truth had best be brought out? Lovelace had for many years occupied himself at intervals with collecting and annotating the evidence, and in the years before he received from his father's heirs the last important collection of papers he had, for lack of private material, sought over the whole field of literature for sidelights upon Byron, the impression made by him on his contemporaries, and the whole framework of the society in which he lived. It was natural that when he came, in his turn, to write about Byron, he should desire to include some of these notes in his book. And if the effect has been to overweight it somewhat with quotations and other extraneous matter, I think no reader of "*Astarte*" will deny that much that he collected is of extraordinary interest. Unfortunately, in the acrimony engendered by his recent contentions with Messrs. Murray, and in his irritation at what he felt to be their complacent possession of his ancestors' affairs, he enjoyed pulling out of their obscurity certain literary quarrels in which the founder of the firm

was belaboured with extreme vigour, and with entire lack of personal respect, by Hazlitt and others.

These methods of controversy no doubt only amused the generation for which they were written, but they disgust the present one; and only a man steeped as Lovelace was in the literature of a hundred years ago, and living much apart from contemporaries, could have failed to see the impolicy of quoting from them now. He had, however, inherited from Lord Byron himself a keen taste for vigorous and incisive language, and as he found himself going over the old ground the old indignation against the injustices of Moore’s “Life of Byron” and of the *Quarterly Review*, and the unfairness of putting on Lady Byron responsibility for the ill-considered destruction of the Memoirs, flamed out again—and he was not to be restrained. The effect has been, as might have been foreseen, entirely unfortunate, creating hostility and prejudice against the whole scheme and motive of the book in many quarters where impartiality and cool judgment might otherwise have been looked for.

Recollections of the extreme avidity with which the public had formerly seized upon every detail of Mrs. Stowe’s revelations, and of the controversy that she provoked, made Lovelace dread for his book a similar “*succès de scandale.*” He desired only to put the truth beyond question, and in order to avoid as far as possible newspaper notoriety, and above

all the possibility of making money out of the story of his ancestors, he decided to print the book privately and to circulate it as a gift among friends and prominent persons in the literary world. He was advised, however, that, in order to protect the copyright, the form of publication must be gone through. This was therefore done both in England and America, the number of copies "published" being restricted to 200. The book first saw the light in December, 1905, and was named "Astarte," in allusion to Byron's tragedy of "Manfred." The following was inserted as a slip in the beginning of each volume:—

*December, 1905.*

"Astarte" is formally published, and a few copies have been sold, but the greater number of a strictly limited impression are not intended for the market; the principal object being to place these records in the hands of those who for special reasons ought to have the means of acquainting themselves with the true position of Lord and Lady Byron and their descendants,—so long and fundamentally misunderstood.

With this view, under instructions from the author, Messrs. Charles Whittingham & Co. of the Chiswick Press have the honour to present this volume. . . .

During the few months that he survived the publication he gave away a good many copies and sold a few more.

libraries, among the latter being Chatsworth and Windsor Castle.<sup>1</sup>

The kindly appreciations written by the recipients of presentation copies cannot be taken very seriously. I will, however, venture to quote from some of the interesting letters that he received at this time :—

*From Lady Ritchie (Anne Thackeray).*

. . . I realise—by myself—what a sorrowful inheritance was yours in this tragic secret, and that you felt it an almost inexorable duty to record it.

No one will ever misjudge Lady Byron again. Death has come with its oblivion and all is over. . . .

*From the Hon. John Fortescue, author of “The History of the British Army.”*

. . . It is an immense relief to turn from the masses of journalism, falsely called literature, full of vulgar pseudo-sentiment and corrupt gossip, which have been thrown up around the name of Byron, to the solid structure which you have built out of your very wide and extensive reading. Yours should be, and, I hope, will be the last word upon the subject. . . .

*From the late Mr. Vernon Lushington, son of Dr. Lushington, D.C.L., M.P.*

. . . The Book with its unanswerable documents must silence the libellers for ever, and establish the honour, truthfulness and extraordinarily self-sacri-

<sup>1</sup> Since his death I have sold in like manner a certain number of copies, and given away several, retaining a very few in my own hands. For these I have for some years refused all applications.—M. G. L.

ficing action of your Grandmother, so cruelly wronged and so wantonly traduced. It must also rivet an odious charge on Lord Byron,—one that will emphasise but not alter our opinion of his lawless character. The first of these results, considered by itself, is a matter for rejoicing, as a tardy act of justice and redress : the second would be (in my opinion) much to be regretted on general grounds, but that the charge is so closely bound up with the false charges against Lady Byron which were and are so public. I thus fully recognise that it was impossible for you to do the first of these two things—justice to Lady Byron—without doing the second also, fixing the particular crime upon Lord Byron, at least without confirming anew and in a most pointed way the suspicions to which his conduct and his words had led long ago. As chief representative of your Grandmother and custodian of the documents, it was for you to decide upon your course. You had to choose. You chose deliberately and with clear conviction, and I do not think anyone is entitled to *blame* your choice, although he may differ from it. On this point as on others my feeling and my judgment go along with Leslie Stephen. . . .

The distinguished figure of your Grandmother is one that I can never forget. On her visits to us at Ockham<sup>1</sup> she was always received with the greatest honour and cordiality by my Father and my Aunt Frances Carr. The younger members of the family gave her their utmost respect, but I don't think any of us attained intimacy. My mature estimate of her character approaches I think your judgment, but

my knowledge is superficial only. To me as to you it seems that Lady Byron went too much by rule, and this sometimes spoiled her practical judgment in extraordinary or complex circumstances. Continuing friendship with Augusta was indeed quixotic. My Father, I notice, tried to dissuade her. I wish he had been inexorable. But of course the decision was with Lady Byron herself. . . .

*From Lady Gregory.*

. . . I don't think the true and painful story could have been told with greater reverence—and I feel that Byron's own life story is in some curious way made better by all the truth being told—it shows him in the grip of a tragedy, no more able to escape from it than the hero of a dramatic imagination from his full three acts. He escaped in the one way he could by early death. Lady Byron's splendid silence is worth putting before the world and is a gift to it. . . .

I am sure you feel rewarded for your labour, which must have been very great, for you have left nothing to be said or surmised as far as is possible. . . . None can tell all the struggles of the soul but we may be sure that “where all is known, all will be forgiven.” . . .

*From Mrs. Earle,<sup>1</sup> author of “Pot-pourri  
from a Surrey Garden.”*

. . . I think you have done it quite admirably and with the greatest dignity, making the truth to *shine* as it always should, in spite of the awful sadness of the tale. Will you think it very strange that it makes me like and even understand Byron better than I

ever did before. In spite of everything it makes him more human, and one *can* understand, as he had little or no moral sense, that his rage against Lady Byron was not so senseless as it has always seemed ; as though she did behave so well, she yet robbed him directly and indirectly of his prey and crossed his wishes most successfully. It is indeed a human document of the greatest interest, as must always be where the inner hearts of men and women are revealed. . . . What I do not even now understand is what motive made him marry at all. Was it that he hoped it would be a blind, which would enable him to cheat the world and continue the intimacy, or was it money alone ? The utter sacrifice of a young girl seems the greatest crime of all. It is very interesting to see how, before she knew the truth, her Mother viewed her daughter's character and its severity, which was the only accusation the world could bring against her. . . .

*From Henry James.*

. . . Let me tell you at once that I am greatly touched by your friendly remembrance of my possible feeling for the whole matter, and of your own good act, perhaps, of a few years ago—the to me ever memorable evening when, at Wentworth House, you allowed me to look at some of the documents you have made use of in “Astarte.” Ineffaceably has remained with me the poignant, the in fact very romantic interest of that occasion. And now you have done the thing which I then felt a dim foreshadowing that you would do—but the determination of which must have cost you, as you show indeed, infinite consideration and trouble, it will

a manner of your own, and in a form, and with a weight and an authority, a general overwhelming massiveness, before which, at first, one catches a little one's breath. I caught mine when I recognised your purpose and the extent of it, but as I went on I saw your act, I can honestly say, as a high and grave inevitability absolutely complete in itself, and justified by the very terms in which you perform it. It is an incantation out of which strange tragic ghosts arise, and other grimacing shapes, and thick troubling fumes of a past that seems to serve for them as a dark underworld ; but such an effect was the essence of your case, and could only come, of itself, from the moment you began to speak, as you have done, from the only real knowledge of what you are talking about (in connection with the matter) that our chattering time has seen. This knowledge, in its kind, strikes me as your warrant, and still more as your necessity (for the act) ; and great is the pleasure of seeing a thing so immutably done. For if you evoke the Ghosts you send them also, with as firm a hand, back to their shades, and I think there is not one of them (least of all the dreadful one of Hayward, whom I distressfully remember) who will ever rise again for an hour. Great is the virtue of History—when it has waited so long, and so consciously to be written, and to be enabled to proceed to its clearing of the air. Between the covers of the book shapes itself the *last word* about Byron—absolutely the last word, strange, portentous and polysyllabic, but admitting now of none other whatever after it. It seems to me equally true that your justice to Lady Byron has the same final and conclusive character,

allowing of no rectification in any sense, and I can't sufficiently congratulate you on not having yielded to any insidious but considerable temptation to dress her in any graces, in any shape of colour whatever, not absolutely her own. To have spoken for her so sincerely and with such effect, and yet with such an absence of special pleading—I mean with so perfectly leaving her as she was—can't have been an easy thing, and remains, I think, a distinguished one. Clear she was, and you have kept her clear ; and amid the all too heavy fumes one puts out one's hand to her in absolute confidence. I think her spirit, somewhere in the universe, must be putting out its hand to *you* !

As for some other questions—by which I mean the form and scheme of the book on the side of illustration and reference and citation—there would be much to say, to my sense, if it were not one o'clock a.m. and I hadn't already written you as long a letter as you will care to read. On the one hand the miscellany is extraordinarily rich and entertaining—and I can but admire and envy you the magnificence of your *Fund*, on which you so royally draw—I mean your fund of reading and historic saturation. Likewise it's interesting to encounter so many vivid and dauntless personal opinions, and so competent a defence of them. I nevertheless think I should have ventured to contend with you on the literary connection, into which, in some places, you expand, and am not sure, in short, that I wouldn't rather have argued for your bundle of precious relics wrapped in a plain white napkin—instead of in your cloth of gold. But these are things to talk of—of which I think with the greatest pleasure

*From William De Morgan.*

. . . I have received the long expected book. I should esteem myself privileged in possessing it if it were only from the fact that it is absolutely unique of its kind. For if analogous circumstances have ever existed, which I doubt, the chances are, I take it, very large that any such book as made up the analogy was a mere *pièce justificative*—the attempt to re-instate, irrespective of facts, of an advocate. My recollection of my own reading at Ockham, of your book before it went to press, is one of scrupulous fairness—I am of course writing now merely to thank and acknowledge—this is hardly a letter—but the slightest inlook I have had time for has carried my impression still further in the same direction.

Your description of Lady Byron simply brings her back to me as I recollect her. And I imagine that if my mother were now living, she would say nearly the same—only that her early memories of your grandmother would of course occasion hesitation on points—reservation outright perhaps. But of one thing I feel quite certain: she would have rejoiced at the removal for the future of the possibility of the sort of imputations and fault-findings that made the tone of so much conversation about Lady Byron. I know how things said grated on her—while of course refutation was what she was not authorised to give, and nine times out of ten, what her hearer would have had no title to receive.

However I mustn’t run on! A Publisher is calling for proofs, corrected. That is funny—isn’t it? What have I to do with proofs? <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> These were the proofs of “Joseph Vance.”

*From Sydney Cockerell (Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge).*

. . . I saw Swinburne and Watts-Dunton last night. They told me at first that "Astarte" had not arrived, but it was discovered among other unopened parcels. . . . However, they are both most eager to read it, and Swinburne said that you would hear from him in a day or two. Watts-Dunton, who is exceedingly learned in all matters connected with poets and poetry, said that he had always believed Mrs. Stowe's statement, and that he regarded the publication of an authoritative summary of the facts as the most important literary event that had occurred for years. He added a piece of information that will interest you, namely that the writer of the *Saturday Review* articles was Mrs. Lynn Linton, "the most brilliant journalist of her time."

*From Algernon Swinburne.*

. . . I am very much obliged by your gift of a most interesting and curious book. It is perhaps a matter for condolence that the intrusive impertinence of scribbling strangers should have compelled you to undertake such a task: it is certainly a matter for congratulation that it should have been so finally and so admirably discharged.

The following is taken from a letter to a mutual friend, written a year later:—

*From M. Paul Bourget to Mrs. Ady (Julia Cartwright).*

. . . Le livre m'a extrêmement intéressé et je le considère comme le document définitif sur le problème de la rupture entre Lord Byron et sa femme.

Il ne me semble pas qu'il dépasse la mesure de ce qu'il est permis de publier sur un grand écrivain plus de trois quarts de siècle après sa mort. Faut-il que je vous avoue que cette passion criminelle, mais vraie, de Byron, donne pour moi à sa figure morale un pathétique que je ne trouvais pas à ses fanfaronnades et affectations. J'aime mieux un égaré, quelque coupable qu'il soit, qu'un comédien. . . .

At this time the notices in the Press were few and unimportant, but six months later, on the death of the author, many of the obituary notices took the form of a more or less complete review of his book. Among much that was trivial and evidently written from hearsay only, there were two or three that showed real study of the subject and an effort at fair judgment. But the general verdict was, on the whole, unfavourable. Even those who recognised the interest and ability of the work declared that it should not have been written. And there was a curious inability to understand its motive. “Why Lord Lovelace should have set his hand to such a task none can explain,” said a writer in the *Tribune*. The following remarks in *Freeman’s Journal* are typical of many other comments. “His freak—and a very disagreeable one it was—was the publication for private circulation of ‘Astarte,’ a fragment of biography devoted to proving the terrible accusation made by Harriet Beecher Stowe against Byron.

To vindicate the reputation of his grandmother

at the expense of that of his grandfather was also Lord Lovelace's object. . . ." Why "*also*"? The vindication of Lady Byron—he being her one male representative—was the *only* object of the book, and if this duty could have been discharged without confirming the revelations of Mrs. Beecher Stowe, how immense would the relief have been!

A more just criticism was to the effect that the book had been too long delayed. If it was to have been written at all, it should have been done when the scandal was in every one's mouth. It is largely in order to explain the obstacles which stood in the way of dealing with the matter at the proper time, that this memoir of Lovelace has been written. It was pleaded that "the Byron mystery" was now shelved and universally forgotten, and that it was a wanton thing to drag it to light again. But Byron is not shelved. And whenever he is talked about or written about, the old figment, that his unhappy wife was to blame for the failure of his domestic life and for his flight into exile, would reappear, and again it would have been said that to the supposed odiousness of her conduct as a wife she had added a crime yet more odious, that of bringing a false accusation against her husband. These lies, however seldom they might now be repeated, had to be destroyed.

I believe that the five years during which he wrote his book were the happiest of Lovelace's life. At last the doubts and hesitations that had tormented

him for thirty years and more had been cast aside ; and as he pondered over the records of his family tragedy, the conviction became daily clearer to him that he had chosen the only true and honest course. He did not hurry himself. After so much delay, a few more months or years seemed to be of small account, and he was naturally deliberate. The occupations of a landowner are manifold, and some of them delightfully absorbing. He could only write in the intervals of other work, and his manuscript was often put aside for long periods. He was also enjoying a new form of society. Young people were growing up in his family and that of his wife. He loved to throw his house open to them, and for their pleasure and advantage allowed every sort of innovation and interruption to his usually quiet life. Those who had always thought of him as rather unsocial were amused to see “Uncle Ralph” the delighted centre of youthful frivolities. Older friends were also made welcome. When I think of those who paced the garden at Ockham with him on those happy summer afternoons, I see the well-beloved figures of W. H. Lecky, Henry James, William de Morgan, Lord Courtney, and of many others who are happily still with us. Part of the year was always spent at Ashley Combe, in Somerset, among the great woods which his father had planted between moor and sea. There he loved to work in his shirt sleeves with shovel and pick, as his father

had been wont to do, cutting rock-paths down the sides of the combes. There was once a delightful fortnight when he was the host of his two Alpine guides, Michele Bettaga and Bortolo Zagonel, from Primiero (in that land for which Italy and Austria have been fighting). Miss Gertrude Bell, whose exploits as a climber are well known, came to help us to entertain these good fellows, and the whole party amused themselves with making "ascents" of the rocks which fringe that portion of the Bristol Channel.

It was in the late autumn of 1905 that he first saw his book in print, and I remember well the sigh of content with which he said that now he hoped never again to talk or think of the subject of it. He kept this vow so well that he never brought himself to face the irksome task of putting in order the mass of papers from which he had worked. A year later I found myself dealing with a maze of confusion, to which he alone had had the clue.

These letters reflect the preoccupations of that time :—

*To the Hon. Mrs. Norman Grosvenor.*

OCKHAM,

*December 30th, 1905.*

MY DEAR CAROLINE,—

Your extremely kind letter is a fresh expression of that steady friendship and sympathy, now lasting many years and for which I always have been and

for personal and family reasons is what I care for most, but I am also glad you should wish to know the truth for its own sake, and especially Lady Byron's “claims to admiration and respect, and the limitations which may have made her an incompatible associate for a man of Byron's fiery and rebellious temperament.” I am quoting from a delightful letter I have received from Mr. Sidney Cockerell. He continues : “I feel great pity for her—but scarcely less for the other two—nay perhaps even more, as they certainly suffered most. Lady Byron had at any rate the support of a clean conscience, whereas the Erinyes must always have been goading her husband and Mrs. Leigh—and making life intolerable for them. One sees the subject stripped of all trivialities, like a Greek drama—and thus detached, one cannot pass judgment. One can only grieve that Fate was so unkind.”

Of course I shall feel highly honoured if Lady Ridley should make up her mind to purchase the book ; and I will write accordingly to the Chiswick Press that, if they hear from her, they are to supply her with a copy. . . . I feel as if the whole country would be pervaded by the Furies when the civil war of the elections breaks out. Mr. Cockerell, in the letter I quoted, mildly reproves me for shewing the cloven hoof of undemocratic ideas in some of my pages, and perhaps I ought to have effaced my own little prejudices, but it is not only or indeed mainly the political levellers I dislike. The invasions of machinery, manufactures, trade, the levelling of antiquities and beauty—the disappearance of the old world of nature and art is what I really hate, and there

I think "socialists" of W. Morris' and S. C. Cockerell's type are quite of my mind. I no more love the revolutionary changes made by capitalists than they do.

But the hour of post approaches and warns me not to start a sermon at you but to wish you a happy new year and send my love to your children and yourself.

*To the same.*

OXHAM,

*May 18th, 1906.*

I do not know how to thank you enough for introducing me to the rich store of poetry and history that is compressed into "Le Jardin d'Épicure." The title itself strongly attracts lovers of Lucretius. Anatole France's own name would, as you may have understood, not in itself have been much inducement ; but on the other hand a book that you have thought over cannot be indifferent to me, and on turning over the pages I find dedications to Lucien Muhlfeld, E. Rod and Th. Wyzewa whose writings I have read with very great admiration. So far I have only traversed the first thirty and the last fifteen pages. I have some reserves to make on the sections about gambling and also I think the author rather haunted by peculiar sentiments as to *la terrible merveille—woman*. I spent some time finding out his texts. Only the first one is from Ecclesiastes, and he has arranged it considerably. In the Vulgate version I find (vii. 27) : "And I have found more bitter than death the woman, who is a fowling snare (*laques venatorum*), whose heart is a fishing net,—her hands

I do not know whence he quotes: “Ne vous appuyez pas sur un roseau qu’agit le vent, etc.;” but “toute chair est comme l’herbe et sa gloire passe comme la fleur des champs” is Isaiah xl. 6, though it does not seem intended to apply specially to woman. It is in Ecclesiasticus (of the Apocrypha), xxv., that he gets: “All wickedness (or roguishness) is but little to the wickedness of a woman. . . . Of the woman came the beginning of sinne, and through her we all die.” So he garbles and mixes not a little.

*Saturday.*—I read some more last night. There is a beautiful section about the last splendid metamorphosis of the butterflies who end their existence in an hour of love and youth (p. 51). On death generally—and indeed life too—he does not seem so strong as his friend Edouard Rod, a page of whose which I particularly admire, I will now quote:—

Les chrétiens disent que notre vie importe peu, que l’autre compte seule, que la terre est une anti-chambre où il ne faut rien casser en posant sa canne et son pardessus avant d’entrer au salon. Moi, je ne suis pas de cette école. Je crois au contraire que notre vie importe beaucoup, parce que je ne suis pas sûr qu’il y en ait une autre. La religion, très bonne chose, mais bien incertaine, cher monsieur! Moi, je n’y pense jamais, sauf le dimanche, quand je vais au temple, à cause de l’exemple. Dans ce que je vous dis, je me place à un point de vue exclusivement terrestre—utilitaire. Et je vous déclare que ma nièce, qui est imprégnée jusqu’aux moelles de l’esprit de sacrifice, a eu beaucoup plus de satisfaction que moi, qui en suis dépourvu. Dans des pro-

portions énormes, monsieur ! Je me suis éreinté pour amasser une fortune : elle a eu toutes sortes de joies infiniment meilleures, dont aucune ne lui a laissé la moindre amertume. Voilà le premier point. . . .

Le second point, c'est le travail utile, simple et productif est incomparablement supérieur au travail compliqué, savant et lucratif. . . . Je veux dire que le meilleur travail est celui qui exige la plus grande fatigue et qui, au lieu de favoriser l'échange, comme le commerce ou l'industrie, augmente simplement la réserve des produits de première nécessité.

Je n'ai pas besoin de dire que l'énoncé catégorique de principes aussi différents que ceux qui ont assuré, depuis ses origines, les progrès de notre civilisation, fit surgir dans mon esprit une foule d'objections. Si je parle ainsi, continua M. Nicollet d'un ton moins assuré, c'est que je sens bien que je suis le moins heureux des habitants de la Villa Charlotte. D'où je conclus que mon frère et ma nièce ont mieux compris la vie que moi."

If it would not weary you too much, I should like to give you "Mademoiselle Annette" from which this long extract comes.

To return to the philosophy of the garden from which Anatole France starts—he appears unable or unwilling either to stay there or find his way back to it. He ends by half envying, half rebuking, the creature of his imagination, who retires (with a beautiful but unthinking Aspasia) into a vacuum of oblivion and indolence. There is something undecided and inconclusive about all the agitations of Anatole France and even about his style. As to

this last my impressions are somewhat slow in forming, and I have yet to discover the striking merits of which one hears so much. Here and there I like something and want also to put a few queries. . . .

*To Miss Gertrude Bell.*

OCKHAM,

*July 29th, 1906.*

Will you accept a copy of William De Morgan's book which I have been reading with the utmost delight? I am assuming your permission and sending it with this—at the same time I mean.

You will find both laughter and melancholy as in life, so combined as to give one the feeling of a living piece out of the world's life—idealised by a poet, who is also a master of irony and humour—gentle without illusions.

In every one's existence there pass by notable specimens of goodness, beauty, vice and crime—but how impossible one feels it to describe them to the life—to penetrate and reproduce their thoughts and words—to convert repulsive monsters into good pictures or plays—but when this is well done what a pleasure it is to read all that one fancies one has or ought to have observed. And how bitter it is to have beheld some human ape and tiger on the prowl and to have been ignorant and powerless to stop their wicked work from thriving and making misery. And yet I can conceive a sort of satisfaction in giving literary form to the terrible drama in which we are perpetually involved though we so little understand it till too late.

In a good book one may recognise all sorts of old

tragedy and searching exposure may be consolatory if written in a serene spirit. . . .

The late summer of 1906 was hot and oppressive. For some reason we did not seek coolness under the pines at Ashley Combe, but lingered on at Ockham. One sultry morning in August, the head-woodman came to report damage done by mischievous boys in Lovelace's favourite plantation. Very wrathful, he sallied forth in the hot sun to the scene of destruction, and came back much heated and tired. That afternoon we had a visit from Mr. Francis Galton, most charming of talkers, kindest and most accessible of celebrated men. There was long and delightful conversation between him and Lovelace on the terrace. Mr. Galton amused himself as usual in our aviary, being especially charmed with the love-drama between Pierrot, the green Amazon parrot, and Rosy Talbot, the pink cockatoo, a recent gift from my sister in Australia. The last word that my husband addressed to me was some joke about Pierrot and his ardent courtship. An hour later he was found on that same terrace, lying on his face in the twilight. He had passed away without fear or pain.

## APPENDIX

### BYRON'S DAUGHTER AND GRANDDAUGHTER

**A**DA AUGUSTA BYRON, born in December, 1815, was married at nineteen to William, eighth Lord King, afterwards created Earl of Lovelace,<sup>1</sup> and died in November, 1852. She was a pretty and attractive woman of exceptional talent, but of somewhat eccentric character. I have little to add to the summary of her life (cut off, like her father's, in early middle age), and the description of her achievements as a mathematician, given by Miss E. C. Mayne, in her "Life of Byron."<sup>2</sup> Her teacher, Professor Augustus De Morgan, said of her that, if she had been a man, she could have been Senior Wrangler.

In the passage, however, which Miss Mayne quotes from Mrs. Beecher Stowe's description of her, there occurs a sentence from which I must strongly dissent, namely : "She married a man of fashion, ran a brilliant course as a gay woman of fashion, etc., etc." Lord and Lady Lovelace no doubt lived in the best society of their day, but neither can ever have been "of fashion." They spent the greater part of their time in the country, he absorbed in his duties as a landowner, she in literary and scientific pursuits.

The correspondence in my hands shows that Lady Lovelace took but little interest in ordinary society. Among her few intimates was Babbage, inventor of the calculating machine ; and it was an unfortunate consequence of the studies that they made together that she

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter I., pp. 7, 8.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. II., pp. 84—86 (Methuen, 1912).

conceived the idea of an “infallible system” of betting on horse-races. Lady Byron blamed Lord Lovelace for having at first encouraged his wife’s taste for racing, and for having introduced her to undesirable acquaintances in the racing world. From his letters, however, it appears to me that he was never more than passively acquiescent in her adventures.

Of course there soon came a dreadful day when the calculations completely broke down, and the unhappy woman found that she had lost a sum so large that she dared not speak of it to her husband. Much trouble and sorrow came of all this, as to which I cannot say more. But it is right to state that Lady Lovelace’s losses were paid by her mother, Lady Byron, and did not fall upon Lord Lovelace’s fortune.

I am glad that Miss Mayne gibbets as “plainly apocryphal” the absurd tale that Byron’s daughter was unacquainted with her father’s poems until her visit to Newstead at the age of thirty-five ! It is entirely untrue.

When she died, from an internal disease, after nearly two years of terrible suffering, her son Ralph was thirteen years old ; but for the last few months of her life he had not been allowed to see her.

Her daughter, Anne Isabella King (known then as “Annabella”), was at this time fifteen years old. She apparently much resembled her mother, though she had darker colouring and rather less regular beauty of features. Both were women of middle height, beautifully formed and proportioned, and with great dignity of carriage. To the last hour of her long life the daughter retained the charm of her delicate and expressive face, with the beautiful dark eyes full of intelligence and loving-kindness. And she shared with her brother the attraction of a sweet and gentle voice in speaking. It will be remembered that this characteristic is recorded of their famous grandfather.

Her own daughter writes of her :—

was unequalled, especially as regards horses, and the rapidity of her pen-and-ink drawings could never have been guessed from their minute perfection. An architectural drawing done by her at the age of twelve was hung in the Royal Academy. The beautiful house at Crabbet was mainly designed by her. That her artistic and literary gifts are not better known to the world at large is due to her retiring nature and love of self-effacement ; she always preferred to enjoy the triumphs of her friends. She was a first-class chess player, mathematician and linguist, being a most distinguished Arabic seholar. She had much knowledge of music, and had been a friend of Joachim.

She was a little over thirty when she married Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, of Crabbet Park, Sussex (who survives her), then in the diplomatic service and not yet known as a poet, and took at once a distinguished place in the best literary and general society of her day, both British and foreign. But she found her real vocation in the adventurous journeys that she undertook with her husband in the seventies and eighties of the last century. She rode—the only woman in the cavalcade—through the wildest portions of the Arabian and Mesopotamian deserts, penetrating to jealously-guarded fastnesses and often in no slight peril. She loved the sun and the wind, and the hills and the freedom of outdoor life ; and her perfect horsemanship, her fearlessness and the habits of extreme abstemiousness which she inherited from her father, Lord Lovelace, made her singularly well fitted to encounter the many difficulties of such travels.

Again I quote from the same source :—

She had been a remarkable long-distance runner until she dislocated her knee on one of her desert journeys. Medical help not being at hand, she continued to ride for weeks with her swollen and useless leg supported by the foot in a rope tied to her waist. She crossed the Tigris, Euphrates and Kherkha rivers either on a goatskin raft or clinging to a swimming horse. Knowing the formidable

nature of these rivers, she foretold the military difficulties in those regions.

To the end of her life the romance and delight of these wild journeys were never far from her memory.

Her principal adventures are related in the two books published under her name,<sup>1</sup> but she was always inclined to disclaim the authorship of them. The fact was that her diaries were rather freely edited for publication by the practised hand of Wilfrid Blunt. But her clear and accurate narrative formed the whole substance of the books, and without her knowledge of Arabic, and the sympathy and understanding with which she conversed with the tribesmen wherever she went, they could not have been written at all.

With her active aid her husband set up the stud of Arabian horses which still exists at Crabbet ; and for years it was her daily occupation to care for the welfare of these beautiful creatures. She was constantly in the saddle, exercising and training them, and breaking-in the young ones, which she did with extreme gentleness and boundless skill and patience :—

At the age of seventy-seven she could still vault on a horse unassisted, and while in the prime of her strength habitually rode a buck-jumper, which afterwards “put down” the crack Australian rough-rider of the day. Perhaps this was her proudest achievement.

The Blunts had acquired a property near Cairo, called “Sheikh Obeyd’s Garden,” where they spent a part of every year, and where a portion of the stud was kept. In her old age, when Crabbet had been relinquished to its present owner,<sup>2</sup> she lingered longer and longer every year in this Egyptian home. She was in England when the

<sup>1</sup> “Bedouins of the Euphrates,” by Lady Anne Blunt (Murray, 1878), and “A Pilgrimage to Mejd,” by Lady Anne Blunt (Murray, 1880).

War broke out, and she yielded to the entreaties of her family so far as to spend the winter of 1914 here. But in the autumn of 1915 she went to Egypt, intending to wind up her affairs and return in the spring, and she never came back. The danger to navigation in the Mediterranean had become too great; and those who loved her here, and out of whose reach she was, could but resign themselves to the inevitable. Her last two years were spent in completing her "History of the Arab Horse," the fruit of many years of study (which it is to be hoped will see the light some day), and in many acts of kindness and care for the British soldiers who now surrounded her in Egypt.

In June, 1917, the death of her niece, Ada Mary, Baroness Wentworth,<sup>1</sup> who had in childhood been the object of her loving care, came to her as a shock. She felt it to be "unnatural" and very repugnant that she must now inherit at her age and from a younger generation the ancient barony of her mother's family. In spite of this change at the last, no one, I think, will ever remember her except as "Lady Anne Blunt."

The heat of two Egyptian summers (though she liked it) had undermined her strength. Her eightieth birthday, in September, 1917, found her very feeble, and two months later, after about a week's illness, she died. Kind friends and devoted servants ministered to her at the last. She lies at Gebel el Ahmar, Abbasieh, under the Eastern sun that she had loved so well.

Much more might be written of her. Many sorrows were hers, especially the deaths of three children in infancy. But no disaster, no wrongdoing of others, ever wrung from her a word of bitterness or complaint. No one was ever so lovingly unselfish as she was:—

To her stoical endurance of pain and hardship, her asceticism and self-sacrifice, she joined a light-hearted gaiety, a delightful humour and lavish generosity and

loyalty of nature, together with fathomless sympathy  
the sufferings and weaknesses of others. To the end  
her life she had the heart of a child, the brain of a scholar,  
and the soul of a saint.

Her memory will not soon fade.